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AMMAN THURSDAY-FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25-26, 1999, DHUL QADEH 9-10, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 Fils

Israeli embassy employee accidentally shot

AMMAN (J.T.) - An employee at the Israeli embassy was injured on Wednesday when he was accidentally shot by one of his colleagues on the mission's premises, informed Jordanian sources said. The sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the employee was seriously injured. The source said Sork Given was hit in the chest and was admitted to the Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery where he underwent an operation to remove the bullet. The sources told the Jordan Times that Israeli Ambassador Oded Oran went to the hospital to supervise the treatment of Given. The Jordanian sources said the person who fired the weapon was not immediately available and a statement from the Israeli embassy was expected to be released later Wednesday.

Assad's son to visit Jordan

AMMAN (AFP) - Syrian President Hafez Assad's son Bashar is to visit Amman on Thursday for talks with His Majesty King Abdullah and to present his condolences on the death of King Hussein, a Palace official said.

China aircrash kills 61

BEHING (AP) - A Chinese airliner plunged into a farm field and exploded Wednesday several kilometres short of its destination in southeast China, killing all 61 people aboard and gouging a large hole in the ground, state media reported. The crash of the China Southwest Airlines jet shook homes in nearby Tangrou. said villager aren Huaniong who praised the pilot for missing his town and putting the plane down in empty fields. The ground is covered in blood," Zhen told The Associated Press by telephone. The house even ranted. It really was very frightening." No foreigners were on the flight from the southwest city of Chengdu to Wenzhou, 1.300 kilometres southeast of Beijing

Zyuganov says Albright shames

agency reported.

women

ettler radio

7 P 14

and 400 killometres south of

Shanghai, the Xinhua news

MOSCOW (R) - The head of Russia's Communist Party said on Wednesday U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had brought shame to all womankind through what he called her unnatural warmongering, "I am alarmed by this Madame, whom I call Madame War," Gennady Zyuganov told reporters in response to a question about peace talks on the Yugoslav province of Kosovo. 'She is a woman, arier all. Rattling rockets and bombs — it is simply against nature," said Zvuganov, who controls the largest bloc of seats in Russia's parliament. "I want to say through you [the media] to all the womens' organisations of the planet and especially of Europe... She is bringing shame on the entire tenrale sex and the female tribe," he said.

Man charged over an prisone Omagh bombing

DUBLIN (AP) -- Irish authorities on Wednesday charged their first suspect in connection with the car bombing of Omagh. more than six months after IRA dissidents slaughtered 29 people in the northern Ireland town. Colm Murphy, 48, a building contractor and pub owner, appeared in Dublin's special criminal coun - where cases are heard before three judges and no jury - three days after police arrested him at his farmhouse near Dundalk. 80 kms north of

Jordan will not be springboard for interference abroad — King

AMMAN (AFP) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Wednesday said he would never allow Jordan to be a springhoard for interference in the internal affairs of another nation and stressed his desire to strengthen ties with Iran.

"We do not allow Jordanian territory to be used as a springhoard for interference in the domestic affairs of another country." the Monarch told AFP in a reference to the situation in neighbouring Iraq, in his first interview since hecoming King on Feh. 7.

The King also moved to smooth over a policy controversy raised when he was quoted by several foreign newspapers as saying Iran was a "threat" to some Gulf states.

"Iran is a very important Islamic country with whom we have strong and hrotherly relations," King Ahdullah said.

Iran officially protested over the King's earlier remarks hut Jordanian authorities bave assured Tehran that his words had heen "taken out of context."

"We wish for the strengthening and development of our relations with Iran and with the rest of the Arab World," the 37-year-old King told AFP at Raghadan Palace.

"We may differ on certain subjects, but through a constructive dialogue we will find common points to develop for the good of our Arah and Islamic peoples." he said.

Relations between the two countries have improved markedly in the past few years, but there are differences, such as over the Middle East peace process.

King Ahdullah also moved to dismiss fears for the stability of Jordan following the death of King Hussein.

"The future of Jordan is clear, and one should he suspicious of what is said in the region with the aim of sowing doubt among friends," be said.

When King Hussein died on Feb. 7. Israel expressed fears that Iraq and Syria might take advantage of the situation to destabilise Jordan.

"Jordan is a state hased on law with stable institutions which will guarantee its future," he said, paying tribute to the "rare cohewhich existed sion" between the Jordanian people and his father. The new Monarch spoke

confidently about Jordan's future relations with the whole Arab World. "We will work to strengthen Jordan's ties with all Arab countries

without exception," he said. He said Jordan would "never vary from the path it has followed" and that be would follow the policies of King Hussein, who ruled Jordan for 46 years.

"Jordan has always heen opposed to any interference in the internal affairs of others, just as it will never allow others to interfere in its own internal affairs." the King added.

On the Middle East peace process, King Ahdullah also pledged to follow in his father's footsteps to see the eventual establishment of an independent Palestinian state and peace hetween Israel and Syria and Lebanon.

"We will continue to offer our Palestinian brothers all means of support to achieve their legitimate goals on their national soil." he said.

He went on to add that he would "spare no effort on all tracks to see peace [hetween Israel,] Syria and Lebanon based on law and justice." On the subject of Jor-

dan's relations with the Gulf states which went into temporary decline following the 1990-91 Gulf War, the King said brotherly ties would outlive "occasional differences."

"We will reinforce the coordination and consultation which was never interrupted, he said, praising the expressions of support for Jordan from across the Gulf following King Hussein's death. "The honourable positions of those countries' leaders are very much respected and appreciated. They constitute a clear sign of developing relations which makes me very optimistic.'

King Abdullah also countered charges of political inexperience, pointing out that he had not simply been a career soldier before he took the Throne, but had heen "very close" to his father who entrusted him with "several political missions."

"I always preferred to be ont of the spotlight, but I'm proud of the Arah and international relations I have woven and I'll work to develop them," he said.

On the domestic front, the King has committed himself to "dialogue" as his main goal hut also pledged to "prioritise the fight against corruption and overhaul economic and socio-economic mat-

King Abdullah, who became Supreme Commander of the Jordan Armed Forces when be took the Throne, also explained his recent retirement of 10 top army officers as a "simple reform. "I wanted to replace

them with a younger generation. My decision by no means suggests that I was concerned or that I wanted to clean up the army," he said.



His Majesty King Abdullah receives condolences Wednesday from Saudi Prince Walid Ben Talal Ben Abdul Aziz during a meeting at Raghadan Palace (Petra photo)

King holds talks with chief Islamic justice, Saudi prince

AMMAN (Petra) - His Majesty King Abdullah on Wednesday received at Raghadan Palace Chief Islamic Justice and the King's Advisor on Islamic Affairs Sheikh Izzeddin Al Khatib Al Tamimi. who briefed the Monarch on Sharia Court procedures and the services they provide to cit-

Sheikh Tamimi voiced appreciation to King Abdullah for the attention and concern he has given to the Sharia Courts.

Also Wednesday, King Abdullah received Judicial Council President Taher Hikmar, who voiced the judiciary system's allegiance to the King Abdullah was briefed

by Hikmat on the role of the judiciary system in observing importance of economic poli-

and protecting the sovereignty of law and upholding justice. The briefing also covered means and methods of further developing the judiciary sys-

day received Saudi Prince Walid Ben Talal Ben Abdul Aziz, who offered his condolences to the King over the passing of King Hussein. Prince Walid also visited the tomb of the late King and recited Al Fatiha, the first sura of the Holy Koran.

King Abdullah also received several Arab investors and members of the Housing-Bank's board of directors, who offered their condolences over the passing of King Hussein. King Abdullah stressed the

agement for Arab investors in economic and development King Abdullah on Wednesprojects in the Kingdom, saying that Jordan will provide the necessary facilities to encourage Arab investment. Also Wednesday, Abdullah received cables of condolences from the presi-

cies in developing the private

sector and encouraging invest-

ment. The King reiterated Jor-

dan's full support and encour-

dents of Malta, Armenia, and Fiji, as well as from the prime minister of Andorra, the Indian parliament speaker, former International Francophone Organisation Secretary General and former U.N. Secretary General Bourros Bourros-Ghali, and International Muslim Women's Association Secretary General Suad Al Fateh.

Last Jordanian prisoners in Kuwait pardoned

held in the Gulf emirate, Jordan-

AMMAN (J.T.) — The errir of ers told AFP that they had the Kuwaiti embassy in Amman accused by some countries of reopen the Jordanian embassy Kuwait has decided to pardon already been collected from jail said it could not confirm the supporting Iraq in the conflict. Last month. the last eight Jordanian prisoners and taken to a deportation centre.

PRESIDENT

ian officials said Wednesday. coincide with Kuwait's national

Suleyman Demirel urged

national reconciliation follow-

ing the capture of Kurdish guer-

rilla chief Abdullah Ocaları, but

tensions grew with neighbour

Greece on Wednesday as

Athens put border forces on

Turkey has reached a turning

"We must bring our children

down from the mountains, for

they are our children, misled

into terrorism, into committing

"We must do this in a way that

does not cause more hurt," he

said, referring to the govern-

ment's call on Kurdish rebels to

surrender on promises of a par-

Demirel, talking to journalists

aboard an aircraft on his way

home from a state visit, criti-

cised Greece for secretly har-

bouring Ocalan on embassy

premises in Nairobi for two

weeks before his capture by

of innocent people has blood on

"I say they are not behaving

like a civilised country. I say this

Newspapers with good con-

carried extracts from what they

describe as Ocalan's confession.

They cite him as saying

Greece sheltered his Kurdish

Labour Party (PKK) and sup-

plied arms, including rockers, for its 14-year fight for Kurdish

Turkish special forces.

his hands," he said.

is hostility."

TURKISH

higher alert.

murders."

tial amnesty.

point," Demirel said.

The eight prisoners were the last Jordanians left in Kuwaiti They said the seven men and jails after Sheikh Jaber Al one woman are due to be offi- Ahrnad Al Sabah granted cially released later this week to amnesty to 13 Jordanians in April 1998.

A date for their return to Jor-A relative of one of the prison- dan was not yet available, and the invasion when Jordan was

Most Jordanians held in

Kuwait were accused of collaborating with Iraqi occupation forces following Iraq's invasion of the emirate in August 1990. Ties between the two countries

supporting Iraq in the conflict.

Jordan's embassy in Kuwait City was closed after U.S.-led forces liberated the emirate in February 1991 and hundreds of thousands of Jordanian and Palestinian workers were expelled from Kuwait.

deteriorated sharply following But relations began to warm a year ago and Kuwait decided to

A Jordanian official said that the government had not been officially notified of Kuwait's decision but was aware of it through the Kuwaiti press.

Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib is expected to travel to Kuwait soon to reopen the Jor-

Iraq says civilians killed in air attacks outside Baghdad

British warplanes attacked targets on the outskirts of the Iraqi capital, killing or wounding several people, the Iraqi armed forces said Wednesday night. In a separate statement, the

Iraqi information ministry accused U.S. warplanes of flying some 20 kilometres beyond the "no-fly" zone, which the Western allies patrol over southern Iraq, towards Baghdad. Iraqi air defence batteries

shot down a missile fired by the U.S. planes, the ministry added, while other American missiles "struck one of our civilian sites, killing and wounding a number of citizeπs."

The United States military confirmed that its planes had attacked Iraqi air defence sites south of Baghdad.

Neither the Iraqi armed forces nor the information ministry gave precise numbers of casualties and it was not possihle to confirm the reports independently.

A military communique said 23 "enemy formations" of aircraft from bases in Saudi Arahia and Kuwait carried out a total of 48 sorties "towards the city of Baghdad."

Referring to the U.S. and British "aggressors," the statement said: "Our anti-aircraft weapons confronted them, forcing them to flee, but these black ravens hit some targets on the outskirts of the city of Baghdad."

The planes bombed a civilian site with sophisticated rockets which led to the martyrdom and wounding of a number of people," the state-

The Iraqi military also said that its 'brave warplanes confronted the enemy formations." "The enemy formations left

BAGHDAD (AP) - U.S. and our national airspace for their bases of evil and aggression in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia at 19:20 p.m. local time." In the United States, military

officials said U.S. Air Force and Navy aircraft attacked two Iraqi surface-to-air missiles sites near Al Iskandariyah, a small town about 30 miles south of Baghdad, in response to anti-aircraft artillery fire directed at allied planes and in reaction to an Iraqi aircraft violation of the southern "no fly"

In a statement from its headquarters at Macdill Air Force Base, Florida, the U.S. Central Command said an unspecified number of F-15e and F/A-18 aircraft carried out the attacks. It did not say what kind of weapons were used.

The sites attacked were at the extreme edge of the southern "no-fly" zone, which extends to the outer suburbs of Bagh-

U.S. and British planes conduct daily patrols in the zone that was established in 1992 to protect rebels from air attack by government forces. There were no coalition air-

craft damaged during the incident and battle damage assessment is ongoing," the U.S. statement said.

Al Iskandariyah is the home of a large military industrial factory, which has been attacked in previous confrontations between Iraq and the

Western allies. The first indication of an attack near Baghdad came at 6:45 p.m. local time Wednesday evening when an air-raid siren wailed across the city.

Witnesses heard anti-aircraft fire near the western suburb of Radwaniyeh.

A second, stand-down siren went off at 7:10 p.m. local



Kurdish demonstrators in Berlin Wednesday stand by coffins with the remains of Ahmet Acar, Sema Alp and Mustafa Kurt, who were shot dead while trying to storm the Israeli consulate in Berlin on Feb. 17, during a mourning march of several thousand Kurds living in Germany to commemorate the three victims (AP photo)

self-rule in which 29,000 have this time we do not foresee." "Whoever supports the killers

A Turkish business group said on Wednesday it would cut trade ties with counterparts in Greece.

government Greek spokesman Dimitris Reppas said Greek forces on the Turkish frontier and islands close to tacts to the security organs have Turkey had been put on higher alen because of declarations from Ankara. But he said he did

not expect any incidents. "We have taken measures of heightened alert in view of any such development — which at

About 6,000 Kurds marched through Berlin to mourn three Ocalan supporters shot dead

while trying to storm the Israeli consulate there a week ago. They were protesting over reports that Israeli intelligence had helped seize Ocalan.

The crowd chanted slogans accusing Turkey, the United States and Israel of "state terror-

In Rome, Kurdish leaders appealed to Pope John Paul II to intervene with Turkey to save

sentence and to defend the Kurdish cause before the world. The plea was made public as

several thousand Kurds and Ital-

marched through the centre of the Armenian capital Yerevan to demand that Turkey release Ocalan and denounce world reaction to the arrest of the Kur-

Ocalan from a possible death

ian supporters, chanting slogans and waving banners, marched through Rome to protest against Ocalan's capture. Some 2,000 of Kurds

Turkey calls on rebels to surrender; Greek army on alert Brandishing banners declaring 'Free Ocalan," and 'Turkey. U.S., Israel terrorists," the crowd aimed their invective at the U.S. embassy and the United Nations building in Yerevan.

"Turkey is on fire and if the

international community sits by and watches cold-bloodedly as Turkey deals with Ocalan, then this fire will spread and burn in every country," said Sabri Tash. a Kurdish representative to the Caucasus region. Armenia is home to around

60,000 Kurds and people of Kurdish origin. Elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, a group of Kurds marched through the Crimean

capital Simferopol, chanting "Down with Turkish fascism," and "Free Ocalan." The widow of French President Francois Mitterrand has asked the leaders of the 15 European Union countries to check urgently on the prison condi-

tions in which Ocalan is being

Demirel's comments were accompanied in some Turkish newspapers by pictures of leaflets dropped on mountain areas where Ocalan loyalists may still be hiding, awaiting the

Radikal daily published one showing a photograph of a happy wedding scene, the groom, an ex-PKK guerrilla, sitting between his mother and his

"Fahri Ertas joined us," the text said. He joined the village guard, he married his sweetheart and now he is happy!"

Iraq's Aziz asks U.N. to ban Turkish incursions

BAGHDAD (R) - Iraq has urged the U.N. secretary general to intervene to prevent Turkey from invading northern Iraq in pursuit of guerrillas loyal to jailed Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan.

"The U.N. should shoulder its responsibility and prevent the continuous [Turkish] threat and aggression against Iraq." Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz said in a letter to Kofi Annan carried by the official Iraqi News Agency on Wednesday.

We urge you... to call on the Turkish government to withdraw its armed forces immediately from northern Iraq." the letter to Annan

incursions had caused "human and material losses" among Kurdish civilians in northern Iraq, for which his country should be compensated.

"The Iraqi government reserves the right of compensation for the damage sustained by such illegal practices." he added. Thousands of Turkish

troops, backed by warplanes and helicopter gunships, poured into the Kurdish-held enclave last week after Turkish commandos captured Ocalan in Kenya. Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit said the operation ended on SunDuring the incursion, designed to weaken the PKK guerrillas, the Turkish authorities called on Ocalan's forces to surrender under a partial amnesty to be passed by parliament after elections in April.

Ocalan has been charged with treason and faces trial in connection with his leading role in the PKK's 14year armed struggle for Kurkish self-rule in south-

Aziz said Iraq rejected Turkey's "pretexts for launching such operations and deems the claim of chasing rebellious elements does not give it the right to continue such poli-

Iraq's Saddam 'teasing' Western warplanes

ABOARD HMS INVIN-CIBLE (R) - Iraqi President Saddam Hussein conunues to "tease" Western aircraft enforcing no-fly zones over his country but is no great threat to British and U.S. forces, a senior British commander said on Wednesday.

Iraqi forces have violated the Western-imposed nofly zone over southern Iraq more than 100 times since Operation Desert Fox. when British and U.S. forces raided Iraqi targets over four nights of air raids in December, said Commodore Anthony Dymock.

The violations range from "just nibbling across the zone to coming right down close to the Saudi border," said Dymock, deputy commander of a British aircraft carrier battle group, "It seems as if they are designed to avoid contact with coalition aircraft if at all possible, and certainly when chased they retreat back over the border," Dymock said on the bridge of the carrier Invincible as a Dubai pilot guided the 20,000-tonne war-

TEL AVIV (AP) — An

Israeli Arab legislator and

an adviser to Palestinian

President Yasser Arafat

plan to meet with Iraqi

President Saddam Hussein.

the lawmaker said Wednes-

day.

The meeting is being Palestin-

organised by the Palestin-

ian National Authority's

(PNA) envoy to Iraq and is

intended to show support

ship into the Gulf Arab emirate's Port Rashid, "It's a sort of teasing operation to test whether we still have the will to go on enforcing the no-fly zone and, of course, we do, Dymock said.

He said Saddam was not conducting a conventional military campaign, but was probably aiming to show that his will and capability had not been completely destroyed by Western military action.
"So, although be doesn't

represent a massive threat at any one time, his constant readiness to probe and look for weakness means that we can't afford to change our stance."

Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon said on Tuesday that U.S. and British warplanes had destroyed about 20 per cent of Iraq's anti-aircraft surface-to-air missile ... batteries since December.

Dymock said there was a weekly pattern to Iraqi aircraft movements.

"He doesn't fly much at weekends." he said, adding that "he's tended not to

Israeli Arab legislators plan visit to Iraq

bring his aircraft within missile firing range and has tended to rely on the ground-based air defence system... We've had no engagements between our aircraft and Iraqi aircraft," Dymock said. No Iraqi aircraft had crossed either the Saudi or Kuwaiti borders "since we've been here" in late January, Dymock said, adding "they've got close but not achieved any-

thing." The southern no-fly zone was imposed after the 1991 Gulf War to protect Muslim Shiites in southern Iraq from attack by Saddam's forces. A similar zone in the north was imposed to protect Iraqi

·Saddam said after Operation Desert Fox - retribution for Iraq's refusal to cooperate with United Nations arms inspectors that Baghdad would no longer recognise the zones.

A young Iranian girl looks Wednesday at campaign posters in Tehran for candidates in Iran's upcoming municipal

elections, the country's first since the 1979 Islamic revolution. Observers say the elections will be a test of the political openness advocated by President Mohammad Khatami (AFP photo)

Libya rejects accusations of 'manoeuvring' over suspects

TRIPOLI (AFP) — Libya rejected accusations Wednesday it was playing games in its quest for guarantees over the fate of two Libyan intelligence agents wanted for involvement in the 1988 Lockerbie bombing. "How can you accuse those

who are seeking necessary guarantees for their citizens of resorting to manoeuvres when it is Libya's natural right to ensure a fair and bonest trial for its sons?" wrote the commentator for the official

JANA news agency.
"The whole world knows perfectly well that Libya first proposed several years ago that the trial should take place

in a third country," said the commentator, whose views are close to those of Libyan President Muammar Qadhafi. "But other parties have rejected this proposal and

continue their own manoeuvring to torpedo or hamper the trial, because they don't have any evidence implicatmg the two suspects," he

The commentator accused those parties of wanting simply to further their own "hos-tile" political objectives political objectives against Libya, which 'rejects the hegemony of Western countries particularly America, against certain countries."

failure to surrender the two suspects wanted in connection with the 1988 bombing of a U.S. passenger jet over Lockerbie, Scotland, that left a total 270 people dead. Diplomats in New York

sanctions since 1992 over its

were pessimistic Monday that the two would be handed over before Friday, when the U.N. Security Council holds its regular four-monthly review of the sanctions.

"It looks like another ploy on their part," said one diplomat familiar with the process. They're playing a game," said another.

U.N. Secretary General

last week to ease Libyan concerns about the incarceration of the suspects if they are found guilty, and on the lifting of sanctions once the two are handed over. But in his response to

Annan, Libyan Foreign Minister Omar Al Muntasser requested further clarifica-

Washington and London bave agreed to Libyan pro-posals to hold the trial in the Netherlands, under Scottish law and with Scottish judges, and are threatening to seek tougher sanctions unless the pair are handed over by the

CIA report a pretext for new attack'

KHARTOUM (AP) CIA report claiming Sudan is acquiring mass destruction weapons is a pretext for the again, the army's spokesman said in remark published

Wednesday.
The spokesman, Lt. Gen.

The CIA report, issued Feb. 9, said Sudan and other coun-

Foo'ad Pharmacy (02)275360

Dr. Walid Halaseh _(05)982799

Palestine Pharmacy..(05)983562

ZARQA:

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

India were key consumers of missile-related equipment and components supplied by Russia, China and North Korea.

The Islamist government of President Omar Al Bashir, who took power in a 1989 bloodless coup, is on a U.S.

about Uganda hosting a meeting for scores of Sudanese opposition leaders who renewed their vow to topple

Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail said Uganda was interfering in Sudan's domestic affairs, 'a very serious phenomenon to which the Security Council must put an end." The paper did not say when Ismail sent the letter. Uganda broke off diplomat-

ic relations with Sudan in

Sudan retorted that Uganda harboured Sudanese opposi-

12 also recommended drawtion for all Sudanese.

between the predominantly animist and Christian southerners who seek autonomy from the Muslim and Ara-

Taleban ask Ben Laden to . return to Afghan stronghold — paper

Taleban militia has asked alleged terrorist mastermind Osama Ben Laden to return to its Kandahar stronghold in southwest Afghanistan, the Arabic newspaper Al Hayat reported Wednesday.

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The London-based daily said a Taleban delegation travelled to Jalalabad in eastern Afgbanistan to meet the Saudi dissident, who left Kandahar around two weeks ago.

The Taleban believes that "Ben Laden will not leave Afghanistan and have come to the conclusion his presence in Kandahar would allow them to limit his movements." it said.

But the multi-millionaire Islamist militant "feels freer in Jalalabad," where he fought alongside the Mujahedeen during the Soviet occupation of the 1980s. it said.

On Feb. 17, a Taleban official said in Washington after meeting a senior U.S. diplomat that Ben Laden was no longer in territory controlled by the Islamist

"He is not in the area in control of the Taleban," Abdul Hakkim Mujahid. the Taleban's New Yorkbased representative said. "He decided himself to leave, we do not know where be is."

Al Hayat said the same day that Ben Laden had moved to a military base near Jalalabad that served the Hezb-e-Islami faction Yunes Khales during the Soviet occupation. It is now also under Taleban control.

Ben Laden is wanted in the United States for alleged involvement in the Aug. 7, 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in which some 250 people were killed, including 12 Ameri-

Washington has offered a \$5 million reward for his capture. Thirteen days after the bombings, suspected Ben Laden bases in Afghanistan were targeted

JORDAN TELEVISION Tel. 4773111-19 PROGRAMME TWO

19:10News headlines

19:35Doc Perspective
20:00 News in Arabic (Channel
2 links up with channel 1)
20:30 Programme on the late
His Majesty King Hussein
21:00 Islamic History in Jordan
21:30 On the Banks of Jordan
22:00News in English
22:10 Doc National Geo-
graphic
23:00News in Arabic (Char-
nel 2 links up with channel 1)

06:05	(Sunrise) Duha
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17:33	
	CHURCHES

PRAYER TIMES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh, Tel. 5920740 Assemblies of God Church Tel.

St. Joseph Church Tel.4624590 Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366 Anglicae Church Tel. 4624853/4624811. St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox

Church Tel. 4771751. Amman International Church Tel. 5865897 German-speaking Evangelical

Congregation Tel. 5688404

for Iraq which has been the target of British and U.S. air strikes. "We see the American

attacks as a war aimed at eradicating the Iraqi people." said legislator Taleb Al Sana. Al Sana said he will be

accompanied on the trip by Ahmad Tibi, an Israeli Arab physician who also serves as an adviser to Arafat. The

The Evangelical Local Church

Church of Jesus Christ of Lat-

St. John the Baptist at De la

Armenian Catholic

The Armenian Orthodox

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Depart-

Skies will be partly cloudy

with a chance of scanered

showers in the northern parts

of the Kingdom, and winds

westerly moderate. In Agaba,

winds will be northerly moder-

.....10/20

Church Tel. 4771331

Church Tel. 4775261

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ter Day Saints Tel. 4654932

in Amman Tel. 5811295

4628052

The

meeting with Saddam is to be beld within the next few weeks, but no date has been set yet, Al Sana said, adding that he hopes other Arab lawmakers will join him. Earlier this month, Israeli

Arab lawmakers met with Iraqi Vice President Taha Muheidn Marouf during the funeral of King Hussein.

Jordao Valley

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 17, Aqaba 22

Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Syria and istrations. Also Thursday, the toum backs Ugandan rebels daily Alchbar Al Yourn reported that Sudan complained to the U.N. Security Council

Umted States to bomb Sudan

Mohammad Osman Yassin, said the U.S. missile attack in August on Al Shifa pharmaceutical plant in the capital Khartoum was one in a series of American aggressions against Sudan for not "revolving in the orbit of the U.S and Israel.

tries such as Egypt, Libya,

"These allegations can be a

new pretext to harass Sudan and aim another attack," Yassin was quoted as saying by the daily Al Rai Al Am newspaper. He did not elaborate. The U.S. administration had attacked the pharmaceutical plant, saying it was used to produce biological weapons.

list of terror-exporting admin-

The Islamic, Abdli ____5666131/7

Hussein Medical Centre...5856856

Khalidi Maternity......4644281/6

University Flospital ____5353444

Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9 Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 477/101/3

Al-Bashir 4775111/26 Army, Marka 4891611/15

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Luzmila

Jordan Hospital

Al Bashir's government. In his letter to the council,

1994, charging that Khar-

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always be verified. Information on

other flights can be supplied on

phone 44 (52700). Information on

Royal Wings flights can be sup-

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

08:50Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)

09:30......New Delhi (RJ)

10:05 _____Beirut (RJ)

10:05Muscat, Dubai (RJ)

10:15Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

10:45Colombo (RJ)

18:15Kuwait (RJ)

19:55Bangkok, Calcutta (RI)

20:00 .Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)

23:40Lamaca (RJ)

.....Sanaa (RJ)

...Bombay (RJ1

__London (RJI

...Kuwait (RJ)

_Athens (RJ)

plied on phone 4875201-5

The three-day opposition conference which ended Feb.

ing a new constitution for Sudan which would guarantee tribal, racial and religious tolerance and self-determina-The recommendations were aimed at providing a solution to the 16-year-old war

Doha (OR)

.....Dubai (EK)

....Muscat, Dubai (GF)

------Paris (AF)

.....Tel Aviv ILY)

-----Cairo 1MS)

..London, Beirut (BA)

...... Istanbul (TK)

.....Amsterdam(KL)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

08:50 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA)

13:45 Tel Aviv (arriving at Marka

18:00. Aqaba (arriving at Marka

23:15 Tel Aviv (arriving at

08:50 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA)

17:30 Gaza (arriving at QAIA)

18:00 ...Aqaba (arriving at Marka

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.....Moscow (SU)

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For Thursday

Airport1(RW)

Airport) (RW)

QAIA) (RW)

For Friday

Airport) (RW)

by U	.S. cruise missiles.
11:35	Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)
	Kuwait (RJ)
	Amsterdam, Paris (RJ)
12:15	London (RJ)
12:15	Athens (RJ)
20:00	Lamaca (RJ)
20:30	Jeddah (RJ)
21:30	Cairo (RJ)
	Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta 1RJ)
Other	Flights
05:50	Damascus, Frankfurt (LH)
14.45	

...Riyadh (SV)

15:00 ... Annabah, Algiers (AH) 15:35Doha (QR) 17:00 Damascus, Dubai (EK) 18:15 Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)

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20:00Beirut (ME) 20:50 Tel Aviv (LY) 21:40 Cairo (MS) 01:55 Moscow (SU) 02:15Amsterdam (KL) 07:15Beirut, London (BA) 07:25 Paris (AF)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights For Thursday 08:30 Agaba (from Marka Air-

pon) (RW)

08:30 Agaba (from Marka Air-13:30 Gaza (from Marka Airport) 16:15 Tel Aviv (from QAIA) (RW)

QAIA) (RW) DEPARTURES

Donat In-		
MONTH THE	rdanian (RJ) Flights	
U6:30	Beirui (RJ)	
11-00	Charles Dellui (K)	
***************************************	Shannon, Chicago (RJ)	
Ц:25	Tunis. Casablanca (R.I)	

11:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka Air-19:45. Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW) 20:15 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)

For Friday port) (RW) 20:30 _Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW) You

By Rana Awwad

AMMAN — Students suf from pre-exam tension wil enally experience feelings ler butterfiles in the sec shaky and sweate hands. sea, and heart palpitation as resilessness. d Studies show that alms

dudents at all educational undergo some degree of a or unease before sitting test. This is reflected to dente physical and psych cal condition as well as performance, they indicate order present form of anxiety order that may cause p distraction, physical symmetric mental blocks that i

Salle College Tel. 5661757 Humidity readings: Amman **EMERGENCIES** Akileh Maternity.......4642441/2 INTERNATIONAL Church of the Annunciation 28 per cent. Aqaba 35 per Jabal Amman Maternity_.4642362 AIRPORT Tel. 4637440 Food Control Centre....4637111 Malhas, J. Amman.4636140 Civil Defence Department 5661111 Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071 This information is supplied by Civil Defence Immediate Res-Shmeisani Hospital5607431 Royal Jordanian (RJ) information

Civil Defence Emergency.....199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade......4617101

Highway Police.....5343402

.....4630341

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Greek Orthodox Church Tel.	
4646138	Following are the tempera
Church of Presentation, Swei-	tures expected today in the fol-
fieh Tel. 5920146	lowing areas:
The Uniate Catholic Church	
Tel. 4624757	Ajlour02/10
The English-Language	Jerash05/16
Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190	Um Qays04/15
Evangelical Free Church Tel.	Madaba03/14
4892679	Petra01/15
The Baptist Church Tel.	Dead Sea09/22

USEFUL TELEPHONE **NUMBERS** NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:	
Dr. Yousef Rashid	487579
Dr. Jum'a Abu Dhiab	4758848
Dr. Khali Jbali	4784450
Dr. Walid Al Masri	5675485

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Water of Democratic Application and Hotel
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Telephone Information (directo-
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Overseas Calls0132
Central Amman Telephone Repairs
4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101
Jordan Television 4773111
Radio Jordan 4774111
Water Authority5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport44-53200
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HOSPITALS

AMMAN: The Arab Centre for Heart and Spe-

Queen Alia Hospital 5157100 Amal Hospital 5607155 Al Amal Cancer Centre .. 5353000 ZARQA: Zarga Govs. Hospital ______(09)983323 Zorga National Hospital 1091900560

Ibn Sina Hospital(09)986731

Al Hikma Modern Hospital

Princess Basma Hospital 4(12)275555 Roman Catholic Hospital (02)272275 Ibn Al Nafees Hospital __(02)7101372.(02)7103101 Rosary Sisters Hospital(02)7102831, (02)7102011

Speciality Hospital _____(02)7103100

AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital (03)2014111

Other Flights

18:15 _____

February 25-26, 15%

Home News



Her Majesty Queen Noor Wednesday meets with Prince Walid Ben Talal at Bab Al

Queen meets with Prince Walid Ben Talal. receives Sultan Qaboos' Advisor Omar Zawawi

Majesty Queen Noor Wednesday met with Prince Walid Ben Talal at Bab Al Salam. Queen Noor thanked Prince Walid for his numerous calls to His Majesty the late King Hussein, while he was undergoing treat-ment at the Mayo Clinic. "It meant so much to us you were thinking of us during that time," the Queen told Prince Walid.

Queen Noor expressed her gratitude for Prince Walid's visit and for his interest in this oasis. our country Jordan, to

Her which King Hussein gave all his thoughts, energy and commit-

> Prince Walid affirmed his support for Jordan saying "I am the ooe of King Hussein and the son of Jordan."

Earlier Oueeo Noor received Sultan Qaboos' Advisor for Foreign Relations Omar Zawawi at Bab Al Salam.

Zawawi was accompanied by his wife, his daughter and his niece Priocess Areej Gbazi.

Prince Zeid visits grave

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Prince Zeid Ben Shaker Wednesday visited His Majesty King Hussein's grave, where he recited verses from the Holy Koran on the late King's soul.

Also yesterday, a number of general directors of public and private companies. students and other citizens from around the country visited the grave.

The Royal Court is still receiving citizens, who are flocking to register their condolences.

Hourani in Baghdad to discuss 1999 trade deal

AMMAN (R) --- Trade Minister Mohammad Hourani left for Baghdad on Wednesday to discuss renewal of an annual "oil for goods" barter which supplies Amman's energy oeeds, officials said.

During the talks, which will start on Thursday, Hourani and his Iraqi counterpart were expected to decide what goods Jordan would supply to frag in return for the 4.8 million tonnes of crude and refined oil it will receive from Bagh-

The officials said Iraq was expected to give a breakdown of the goods it seeks under the barter protocol. The two sides would also discuss separate Jordanian bids for food and medical export contracts under the "oil-for-U.N.-approved food" accord.

Officials say this year the value of Jordanian goods sent to Iraq under the bilater-

4.24

al protocol is likely to be at most \$200 million, compared to \$225 million last reflecting weak international oil prices.

"The drop in the value of the protocol this year is due to the fall in world oil prices," sald a trade ministry

The value of Jordanian goods which Iraq is owed under the protocol has in the past been calculated at a half of the total value of the oil, minus a small discount, industry experts say. The Central Bank handles

accounts and pays Jordanian exporters out of a fund financed by oil imports from

Three years ago, when poliocal ties between the two countries cooled, Jordan halved the value of goods it sent to Baghdad, which had stood at over \$400 million. saying Iraq was running up debts according to the agreed pricing.

The United Nations, which imposed strict economic sanctioos oo Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, has turned a blind eye to the trade protocol which lets resource-poor imports all its oil require-ments without paying out hard currency.

Jordan bas been totally

dependent on Iraq for its oil supplies since Saudi Arabia stopped the flow of an esti-mated 40,000 barrels per day (bpd) of crude to punish Amman for its pro-Iraqi sympathies during the 1990-91 Gulf war.

Jordan and Saudi Arabia nave since williessed a gra ual warming of ties and Amman has come under pressure from Western and some Arab supporters to reduce trade with Baghdad.

But Gulf oil-producing countries have yet to offer Jordan comparable terms for alternative supplies of oil.

SPP building under way in Amman, Zarqa, other projects to get started in Marka areas

AMMAN (Petra) — Under the framework of the Social Productivity Programme, the General Corporation for Housing and Urban Development is currently working on improving the infrastructure of three areas in Amman and Zarqa in order to boost living and environmental

standards there. Director General Yousef Hivasat said that in July the corporation will start building 100 housing units worth JD400.00 in Zarqa's Al Zawahreh area that will accomodate 675 people.

The project, expected to be completed by October 2000. will include renewing water, wastewater and electricity networks as well as constructing new roads and

Hiyasat added that another similar project will begin in Marka area, where Wadi Qattar residents will benefit from the construction of 174 housing units worth JD630,000 and will be built

on 175 dunums. The units will house 1,300 people. The project's implementatioo is expected to start in

August and it will include similar water network facili-The third project, slated to begin in October, will be the

development of Marka's Abu Sayyah village, where 100 housing units worth JD900,00 will be constructed on 241 dunums for 600 people, according to the director general.

Insurance and Auditors Union presses government for amendments to new banking hour regulations

By Suha Ma'ayeh

AMMAN — The Jordan Trade Union of Insurance and Auditors Employees (JTUIAE) is pressing the government to introduce changes to the Central Bank of Jordan's recent decision to implement a two-day weekeod and

exteod daily banking bours. The union sent a memorandum to Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh oo Mooday urging him to alter working hours so that bank employees start work at 8:00 a.m. and finish at 3:30

deputy blasted the CBJ decision on grounds that the CBJ is not entitled to specify working bours.
"The bank is entitled to

Fakhri Zayadin, JTUIAE

regulate the working bours only, specifying them resulted in having long working days," Zayadin told the Jordan times. The CBJ decisioo, announced earlier this month by Ziyad Fariz, CBJ

'The proposed change might with storms of protest. force a cutback in the workforce,

especially among working mothers'

— Zayadin

governor, asked the country's 22 commercial banks to close on Friday and Sat-urday as of March 1, instead of Friday alone, and to increase daily working bours to make up for the

Under the new rules. banks will have to operate from Sunday to Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with

a 30 minute lunch break bringing the total number of working hours to a maximum of 42.5 instead of 36

Most of the country's 15.000 bank employees received the announcement

"The new measures overstep employees' rights acquired over the years," Zayadin said.

"Bank employees are better off [to start work] at 8:00, there is no justification that employees stay at bome till 8:30 a.m.," he said. "If we do without the 45-minute daily break banks are considering, then bank employees can work 40 bours instead of 42.5."

Bankers who believe the new arrangements will boost economic and business performance said prolonging working bours at financial institutions for another three bours will

narrow the gap between the ees' salaries to compensate Jordanian fioancial sector and major financial markets.

Now that banks have lent their approval to the CBJ decisioo, Zayadin said they must abide by the 1996 Labour Law.

The proposed change might force a cutback in the workforce, especially among working mothers, he said.

Article 72 says in instituoons where there are more than 20 mothers, employers should secure nurseries for children below the age of

"We also believe that opening the doors to the public at 8:00 and closing them at 12:30 is an acquired right, therefore we are against having to attend to the customers' needs for a longer time," Zayadin said. The trade union is asking

"Our practical suggestions, which are in line with the 1996 Labour Law, were not taken into considera-

them for the extra working

"Most bank employees

bave adjusted their day-to-

day life styles around six-

hour work day, and the

change will affect families'

affairs, both socially and economically," Zayadin

"If a working mother who

has taken a housing loan

decides to quit her job after

the decisioo is approved.

this will surely hurt the

family's income," Zayadin

bours.

tion," Zayadin stressed. We are asking for a dialogue with the prime minister, the CBJ and the Association of Banks to take our opinion into consideration.

Jordan denies establishment of Israeli intelligence office in Amman

'No Israeli offices in Amman except for the Israeli embassy' — Tarawneh

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan categorically denied rumours alleging it has allowed Israeli intelligeoce services to open an office in Amman and senior officials bave described the allegations as sheer imagi-

Interior Minister Nayef Qadi told the Lower House of Parliament that there is no truth to the rumours.

"Except for the Israeli embassy in Amman there are no other Israeli offices [operating in the Kingdom] wbatsoever. This applies to [Jordan's activities in Israel] which are limited to ber embassy in Tel Aviv."

The minister respooding to a query in Parliament. by Deputy

Fawaz Zou'bi demanded that the government clarify the situatioo and refute rumours by wbat be called "certain elewbo conspire against the Kingdom."
Minister of Municipal

and Rural Affairs and the Environment Tawfiq Kreisban responded to a query by another deputy concerning the municipal elections. He said that these elections will take place on schedule in the first balf of

He said the ministry bas introduced an amendmeot to the municipalities law. Parliameot's Legal Committee will meet today to debate it before it is referred to the full bouse

Minister of Water and Irrigation Hani Mulki responded to a query by another deputy concerning the construction of a diversion dam oo the Yarmouk River in northern Jordan.

He said according to the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty, the dam is needed to secure Jordan's share of the river water. He said last year the two

countries began constructing the JD1.65 million diversioo dam to more effectively utilise 40 mil-lioo cubic metres of the river water each year and regulate year-round inflow of water to the 110-kilometre-loog King Abdullah Canal in the Jordan Valley.

Under Annex II of the peace treaty. Israel may extract 12 million cubic metres of water during summer months --- May 15-Oct. 15 — and Jordan extracts the rest of the Yarmouk's flow, In winter --- Oct. 16-May

14 - Israel pumps 13 million cubic metres and Jordan concedes to Israel pumping an additional 20 million cubic metres from the river.

Minister of State for Development Affairs Taher Kanaan deputies' queries about his visit with the ministers of planning and finance to Saudi Arabia.

Japan donates medical equipment

He said the delegatioo's visit was successful by all

"We bave found great appreciation of Jordan's economic concerns and Saudi leaders said they would respond positively to our needs in accordance with their own financial situatioo and the decline in the price of oil," Kanaan

pointed out.

He said, "We came to an agreement with the Saudi brothers oo bolding a meeting by the joint Jordanian-Saudi Arabian economic committee to discuss trade exchanges and on opening the door to Jordanian workers and on eocouraging investment and capital flow between

Young artists win accolades at international children's art exhibition in Czech Republic

young Jordanian artists wbo participated in an international exhibition of children's art in the Czecb Republic have been awarded a medal and two honourable diplomas for tbeir drawings.

The jury of the 26th Lidice Exhibition bas cbosen the works of Tareq Bisbara Al Najjar (15), Osbtar Salim Sunna (7) and Manal Saleem Fasheh (14) of the National Orthodox School amoog the remarkable entires coming from over 60 countries.

The exhibition is held annually to bonour the memory of the young victims who perished in the destruction of the Czecb town of Lidice during World War II. The competition is open to artists between the ages of five and fifteen.

Jordanian students bave participated regularly in

AMMAN (J.T.) — Three the last few years of the exhibition that brings together artwork by European, African, Arab, Asian and American children.

The awards of Lidice '98 will be banded to the Jordanian students by Czech Ambassador to Jordan Tomas Smetanka today at 10:00 a.m. at the embassy in Abdoun.

Lidice '99 exhibitioo, devoted to the International Year of the Elderly, will open in June in the Czecb Republic. Paintings, graphics, sculptures and photographs related to theme of elderly, for examply, "my grandparents," "elderly people in my town," as well as to the permanent theme of the exbibition (Life of the World's Children). All works received before April 1, 1999, will be welcome.

to family planning association AMMAN (J.T.) Tokyo bas extended a press release. grant of \$80,156 to the The Japanese govern-Jordanian Association for Family Planning and

Protection (JAFPP) to fioance necessary medical equipment for a new clinic in Amman, according to a press release issued by the Japanese embassy. The grant agreemeot

was signed at the embassy Wedoesday by JAFPP President Anwar Al Hadid and Koichi Matsumoto, ambassador to Jordan. The JAFPP, set up in

1964, has been a leading organisation in addressing populatioo issues. It currectly ruos 18 clicics and two mobile clinics to provide medical services to expectant mothers and newborn babies and to raise public awareness of reproductive bealth.

ĴAFPP's new clinic, near Al Hussein Sports City, falls within the association's plan to

expand medical services to the public, said the

ment's grant will enable the associatioo to purchase obstetric and gynaecologic medical equipment. "It gives me great plea-

sure to be a signatory on bebalf of my government to an agreement extending assistance to a vital bealth sector that focuses on the health of children and women, a right that is guaranteed by international cooventions." Matsumoto told the signing ceremony. "Japan will continue to

support sucb medical schemes that beoefit Jordaoiaos, because healtby citizens means a bealthy society and a healthy nation, something that should be among the priorities of governments." The government of

Japan is also implementing a family planning project in Gbor Safi, at

work since 1996, io cooperatioo with the Ministry of Health, the National Population Committee (NPC), Queeo Alia Fuod for Social Development (QAF) and JAFPP.

The latest grant is extended under the framework of Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (GAGP) Programme, which mainly aims at supporting Noo-Governmental Organisation (NGO's) and local governments.

The government of Japan has so far extended \$3.1 million to NGO's and local governments in Jordan under the GAGP programme. Japan's contributions to the medical sector in stands Jordan \$661,023.

Tawjihi stressing you out?

You may suffer from testaphobia — a certified anxiety disorder

By Rana Awwad

AMMAN — Students suffering from pre-exam tension will generally experience feelings of jitters, butterflies in the stomach, shaky and sweaty hands, nausea, and beart palpitations, as well as restlessness, doctors

Studies show that almost all students at all educational levels undergo some degree of anxiety or unease before sitting for a test. This is reflected in students' physical and psychological condition as well as their

performance, they indicate. Doctors say "testophobia" is a widespread form of anxiety disorder that may cause meotal distraction, physical symptoms and mental blocks that render

studeots unable to think effectively of the task at hand.

"Students view tests as a threat, a perception which generates a sense of fear, relentlessness and sometimes a wide range of scepticism about one's ahilities to overcome such a posing danger," said Imad Khreim, a psychiatrist with a subspecialty in mood and anxiety disorders.

However, a certaio amount of tensioo could sometimes be a blessing in disguise as it belps students perform better.

"If the amount of adrenaline in the blood increases, it results in more alertness and bence more focus," said one health

But when tension exceeds the normal limit, it may negatively

Doctors say

'testophobia' is a widespread form of anxiety disorder that may cause mental distraction, physical symptoms and men-

tal blocks that render students unable to think effectively of the task at hand.

disturb other body fuoctions, often resulting in less sleep, strange dreams and nightmares, loss of or excessive appetite, lack of concentration and forgetfulness, Khreim explained.

Last year, Jordanians were sbocked by a "stressed" Tawjihi student who murdered 11 family members. The studeot, who did not pass the exam the first time, was qouted as saying that the iotolerable pressure he was subjected to prior to the exam and the threat of being kicked out of the house if be failed a second time led him to commit the crime. Experts said tension and a sense of worthlessness were cited as critical factors behind the crime.

According to Khreim, treatment programmes involve psychotherapy or the so-called "talk therapy" where a psychiatrist traces the patient's exaggerated worrying thoughts. They are often combined with

symptoms of anxiety disorders. The Ministry of Education is currently considering the idea of cancelling the Tawjihi (high school general certificate exam)

medical treatment to relieve

by the year 2003 on grounds it does oot provide an accurate measure of studeots' academic abilities and because of the "enormous amount of stress it creates for students and their families."

However, officials remain divided on a suitable substitute for the exam.

As for now, the one-chance Tawjihi remains the sole criterioo for admittance to the universities or any post-scholastic education. According to last year's

Tawjihi results, only 47.9 per-cent of total of 98,394 students who sat for the exam passed. Many Tawjihi students bave

often described their last year in high school as a nightmare, a disaster and a feeling of impris-

According to school councillors, exam-related stress forms the majority of cases they encouoter.

The Department of Counselling and Special Education at the University of Jordan believes a large percentage of Tawjihi students suffer anxiety, usually in the form of nervous breakdowns. fainting,

beadaches. He added that they are more prone to diseases such as flu and colds due to the low immunity level caused by anxi-

Nazih Hamdi, associate professor of counselling psychology at the University's Faculty of Educational Sciences, says some students engage in what is known as avoidance behaviour by stopping studies.

Experts suggest different tips and relaxation activities which may help students alleviate their anxiety, such as listening to music, exercising, or taking long baths. Experts also recommend that students substitute oegative thoughts with positive ones, and urge them to have confidence in their abilities.

Serbs proclaim victory in Kosovo talks; Albanians defiant

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — With the threat of NATO air strikes temporarily averted. Serbia's negotiators returned home in triumph Wednesday from Kosovo peace talks. declaring they had prevailed against enormous international pressure.

State-run media joined in the exultation, describing the outcome in Rambouillet, France, as a victory for the govern-ment's policy of keeping foreign troops out of the

In another ominous sign for prospects for a peace ethnic settlement, Albanian leaders pressed ahead with their goal of independence and took a step effectively sidestepping the negotiations

Ethnic Albanian sources said the Albanian delegation in France, which was unable to get international officials to go along with its demand for an indereferendum. had decided Tuesday to form a new "govern-ment" that will function until elections can be

The government will be a coalition of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and two major political parties — Ibrahim Rugova's Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and Rexhep Cosja's Union of Democraric Movement - said the

bring unity to the often Albanian political parties. Rugova, who until the talks had ignored the rebels, has for seven years headed a self-described ethnic Albanian government which is not recognised by Serbian authori-

Peace talks were suspended Tuesday until March 15 after Western mediators extracted only agreement partial between warring Serbs and ethnic Albanians from Kosovo on a political |framework for the separatist Serbian

province.

The military part of the proposed accord - which provides for the stationing of 28,000 NATO peacekeepers to oversee implementation - was left unresolved because of Serbia's steadfast refusal to allow foreign troops

onto its territory. Serbian President Milan Milutinovic told reporters at Belgrade airport that the talks had achieved "significant initial success" in solving the prob-

lems in war-torn Kosovo. "Our principal efforts to preserve the territorial integrity and sovereignty of our country were affirmed," Milutinovic

The note of triumph was echoed on Serbia's staterun television, a govern-

Milutinovic's news conference after talks had been suspended. He described attempts to pressure the Serbs into accepting NATO peace-keepers as a "farce and a circus.

"No agreement on military forces" declared a headline in the Politika Ekspres daily. "Our people know bow to respond to aggression, said a headline in Borba.

Both newspapers are controlled by the ruling socialist party and reflect

the government's view.
"If necessary, we will
go to war (with NATO) bravely and heroically," declared Gen. Nebojsa Pavkovic, the Serb commander in Kosovo, as cited by state television.

In Kosovo, the mood mong prominent ethnic Albanians was defiant.

A top KLA figure and the chief ethnic Albanian delegate in France. Hashim Thaci, was quoted as saying Kosovars 'sbould not from the next round of negotiations, and urged them to unite behind and strengthen the

"I did not sign any agreement Rambouillet," Albanianrun media quoted him as saying. "I can sign only an agreement authorised people of

The Kosovo Albanian negotiators were expected back from France later



Dozens missing in Austrian avalanche; 14 confirmed dead

LANDECK, Austria (AP) who were flown by beli- Hundreds of soldiers arrived by helicopter to a stricken town Wednesday to help residents dig for avalanche that has killed at

Tuesday's avalanche at people, many of them Galtuer was expected to German tourists, had been rise, provincial governor evacuated to Landeck. Wendelin Weingartner told where rescue operations reporters. About two dozen people were still missing in the village in the Tyrol province, near the Swiss

. Children, foreign tourists and locals were among the missing and those killed, Weingartner said. Dutch television reported that as many as 13 Dutch nationals were among the missing.

Rescue workers recov-

copter to regional bospitals. Six of the wounded required intensive care and were taken immediately to the hospital near Landeck,

By midday, at least 350 were headquartered.

"I thought it was just a storm," said Hanno Heinz, 17. from Radstadt, Germany, Heinz, who was visiting Galtuer, added that the snow came with such force that it blew open the hinged windows of the guesthouse, dumping 10 centimetres of snow on the

The Galtuer avalanche

strike Central Europe this winter as the region continues to endure its heaviest snowfall in 50 years.

Tens of thousands of travellers have been stranded in train stations, traffic jams and isolated resort towas across France, Italy, Switzerland and Austria as avalanches buried homes, than 60 people across Europe bave died in

avalanches this year. Snow was so heavy that it forced a rare cancellation of Wednesday's events at the Nordic skiing world championships Ramsau in central Austria, where a halfmetre of snow fell overnight. "We haven't bad so much snow in 25 years." said Wolfgang Mitter, the ered at least 20 injured, was one of the worst to organising committee chief.

Two Singapore critics jailed, candidacy barred for illegal rally

Singapore opposition politicians were jailed for 12 days and barred from running for parliament in the next election after being convicted Wednesday of holding an illegal

Chee Soon Juan, secretary-general of the riny Singapore Democratic Party (SDP), and assistant secretary-general Wong Hong Toy, refused to pay fines and were immediately jailed in default, associates said.

"I am not on trial for a crime. I am in a political struggle. What is on trial is the system the PAP has created." Chee had said in court during his final submission, referring to the People's Action Party (PAP) which has ruled Singapore for 40 years.

Chee, a U.S.-trained neuro-psychologist, was fined 2.500 Singapore dollars (\$1,470) while Wong was fined 2,400 Singapore dollars - effectively barring them from running for parliament.

already made their stand very clear that they are not going to pay the fine and they have already been taken to the remand prison." Gandhi Ambalam, vice-chairman

Any fine in excess of 2000 Singapore dollars bars a citizen from running for office for the next five years. Chee ran unsuccessfully in the last elections, held in January 1997, for a five-year parliamentary term.

was present at Tuesday's proceedings, received the news calmly. "It was not unexpected," she

law on public speeches was being applied in favour of the PAP.

"Government has stipulated that talks of a political nature are not allowed because they might lead to public disorder." he said. "Why then are PAP leaders

"It is because of what the ruling party has been doing to the opposition that has led me to this present course of action, or I won't have to resort to public speaking," Chee said

since 1959 and won all but two of the 83 seats contested in the January 1997 parliamentary elec-

The SDP's Ambalam said his leaders.

"Democracy does not mean only contesting elections or holding elections once every five years," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

No decision to sign CTBT yet, says Indian FM

NEW DELHI (AFP) - India has not yet decided whether to sign the global nuclear test ban treaty. Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh told parliament Wednesday. Singh told the lower house there was not an "iota of truth" in reports that India had agreed to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in "its present form." "The government's stand remains what it has been ... what (the prime minister) has stated in the United Nations General Assembly." Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee had told the U.N. that India was prepared to bring its discussions with they introduced. to bring its discussions with "key interlocutors" to a successful conclusion so that the entry into force of the CTBT was not delayed beyond September 1999. While that statement was widely taken as a pledge to sign the treaty before September, Indian officials have insisted it was not a binding commitment. India has made it clear that it will not be guided by anybody in defining its nuclear deterrent." Singh said, referring to ongoing nuclear talks with the United States. "We shall define our own nuclear deterrent on the basis of our own assessment. We will not accept any suggestion from outside as to what the mini-mum deterrent should be. Singh said the talks with the United States — after eight rounds — were now focused on four issues related to security, disarmament and non-proliferation. "It has been decided that India-U.S. expen-level teams will meet in March for follow-up talks on export controls. The leaders of the delegation will also remain in contact," he said. "While these talks would continue, both sides will endeavour to create a positive atmosphere for furthering their relations."

Strike brings Bangladesh's main port to a halt

CHITTAGONG, Bangladesh (AFP) — A protest strike called by the opposition — in an attempt to disrupt local elections halted operations at Bangladesh's main port of Chittagong Wednesday, officials said. A port official said 30 ships carrying food were waiting in the Bay of Bengal for space to berth while about a dozen container vessels were either waiting at the outer anchorage or the port jetty. The official said 14,000 containers were at the port awaiting delivery and 4,000 more were on waiting ships. "It is real chaos as we have capacity to accommodate 10,000 comainers." he added. The general strike kept businesses shut and most vehicles off the streets in this south-eastern port city. Bombs went off in the capital Dhaka Wednesday on the second of three days of local elections amid the opposition stoppage. The strike has triggered violence in major cities, leaving three dead. The opposition led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party has called the general strike, set to end Thursday night, to disrupt the polls. It accuses the Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena of bias and has demanded his resignation. He rejected the charges. The business community has repeatedly voiced concern over recent political shutdowns which are estimated to cost the economy four billion taka (\$83 million) a day. "It hurts all and benefits none." said Abdul Awal Mintoo, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Malaysian state opposed to foreign observers monitoring election

KOTA KINABALU, Malaysia (AFP) — A senior official in eastern Malaysia's Sabah state Wednesday criticised moves to invite foreign observers to monitor an upcoming election. Osu Sulcam, deputy Sabah chief minister said it was "an insult to the sovereignty of the country to suggest international observers to monitor and check the election process in the state. "The election commission is well prepared and capable of handling the state election in fair and proper manner." Ost said it was the norm for the opposition to paint an ugly picture of the government as if it was not capable of conducting a proper election. Meanwhile, Harun Din, election commission chairman who arrived here to oversee preparations for the twoday election from March 12 avoided comment on the demand for foreign monitors. "It is up to the government to decide whether to allow international observers to monitor the election," Harun said. The opposition Sabah United Party (PBS) said Tuesday it wanted international observers. We urge the federal government and its agents to refrain from repeating the undemocratic actions imposed on PBS and the people of Sabah during the 1994 elections," said PBS President Joseph Pairin Kitingan. Its main fear is the presence of so-called "phantom voters" on the electoral rolls — allegedly taken from the estimated hundreds of thousands of immigrants from neighbouring Indonesia and the Philippines. PBS, which says the practice was rampant during the 1994 elections, recently reported to the election commission that there were still some 5.000 dubious voters on the rolls.

Police surround house seized by fugitive bank robbers

NAIROBL Kenya (AP) - A gang robbed a bank in the Kenyan capital Wednesday, then hijacked a car and fled to a home where they took the family hostage. Police surrounded the house and killed one of the robbers. About 50 officers took up positions around the house, occupied by an Indian family in a west Nairobi neighbourhood, and were preparing to use tear gas to flush out the gang after firing numerous rounds at the one-storey building. The drama began at around 11 a.m. (0800 GMT), when at least 10 thieves robbed a Nairobi bank of 3 million Kenyan shillings (\$50,000) and commandeered a car. Police managed to arrest six of the thieves at the scene, but the rest escaped and occupied the house. The robbers allowed the family's housekeepers to leave, but were still holed up inside at 2 p.m. (1100 GMT), police said.

3 die as riots spread across Mauritius

PORT LOUIS (AFP) - Three people died in noting which spread across the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius following the suspicious death of popular reggae singer Kaya, police said Wednesday. Kaya died Sunday while in police custody, sparking violence in the capital Port Louis. The rioting has spread to other areas. Schools and colleges were closed for a second day as the island prepared for Kaya's funeral in Port Louis later Wednesday. Several thousand young Rastafarians were expected at the ceremony. Meanwhile, police said cars and buses were set alight overnight as noting continued. The army was called in early Wednesday as violence flared in the Quatre Bornes area. 15 kilometres south of the capital. The funeral of Berger Agathe, who died of injuries Monday after being hit by a rubber bullet fired by anti-not police, passed off peacefully earlier Wednesday. Agathe, another well-known reggae singer. was a friend of Kaya. It was unknown whether the three deaths confirmed by police included Agathe. Tuesday, protesters set up barricades across the main roads linking the capital with the rest of the island. Several police stations were attacked across the island and some looting was reported. The government sacked the head of the special mobile force, an elite anti-riot police unit, in the wake of the violence, island television reported, Kaya was arrested last Thursday after smoking marijuana at a rally organised by the Political Republican Movement to press for legalisation of the drug, known locally as "Gandia."

KLA's news agency ment mouthpiece, which Kosovo Press and the reran four times overnight British press discouraged over 'chaotic' Kosovo talks

LONDON (AFP) — If there was a winner from s the fudged Kosovo peace talks. Britain's Daily Telegraph commented Wednesday, it was surely Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic.

"No one has gained from the chaotic peace conference." the daily wrote in an analysis piece after the talks at Rambouillet outside Paris broke up with only an agreement by the warring sides to meet again on March 15.

"No Slobodan Milosevic," the paper added. "who has been given a few more weeks to kill Kosovo Albanians before there will be any more talk of unleashing NATO on

Ostensibly, the timespan will allow the Serb and ethnic Albanian sides to consult back home on a tentative settlement for But none of the parties hold by such inconclusive signed up to any deal, and talks. the thorniest military questions, deployment by NATO peace troops in the province and the disarming of the Kosovo rebels. remain unresolved.

The Telegraph said it was what happened "when short-term fixes are sought to ancient problems," and warned the international community to "prepare for the long haul."

For the conservative daily, the talks were a "humiliating climbdown" by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who set an ultimatum for an agreement only to see it

The Times agreed, saying her reputation had taken a beating over the past few days." lt regretted

Operation Agricola, the British codename for deployment of troops to

The Guardian said the six-nation Contact Group, which organised the peace conference, was now forced to look for ways to "put the best possible face on failed talks." It highlighted the situation among a war-weary population on the ground in Kosovo, a theme taken up by the Express Daily which quoted one Kosovar saying "If this is peace, why are they firing

The Independent, under the headline: "Triumpb off the agenda for Kosovo," noted that American frustration was evident.

at us?

'Washington forgot that Kosovo was a zero sum game," the paper's analysis ran. "just as Northern Ireland was (and in some extent still is) - where a gain from one side is invariably counted by the

China blasts NATO Kosovo threats

Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan denounced Wednesday NATO threats of military action in Yugoslavia, strikes would not help resolve the Kosovo crisis.

Tang repeated Beijing's blanket opposition to the use of force against sovereign states in a meeting with Yugoslav Ambassador to China Slobodan Unkovic, and added that military action in Kosovo would violate

"Military action is detrimental to the final solution to the problem and would also cut the peace negotiations which have already seen certain development," Tang was

the U.N. Charter.

quoted as saying by the official Xinhua news

"We call on the international community and all relevant sides Yugoslavia to continue seeking ways for a political solution," he added.

NATO has geared up to carry out air strikes against Serb forces in Kosovo to end violence against ethnic Albanians. Tension eased late Tuesday after marathon talks reached agreement

to extend substantial autonomy to Kosovo. The deal struck in Rambouillet, France, saw the Serbs accept the principle of autonomy but reject independence for Kosovo or giving it the status of a third republic within Yugoslavia.

The result fell short of expectations raised at the start of the conference on Feb. 6. when leaders of the major powers brandished harsh words at Serbian authorities, saying they would face immediate air strikes if

they wrecked the talks. China has blasted the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) several times in recent months over its threats to intervene in the conflict.

Beijing has also opposed NATO expansion plans, painting the Western military alliance as a relic of the cold war that is grasping for a new role as n "global cop."

SINGAPORE (AFP) - Two Mavis Chionh noted that both the accused had acknowledged they failed to apply for the licence to make a political speech outdoors on Jan. 5 and thus had acted in a "deliberate" and "wilful" manner

"At the moment they have of the SDP, told reporters.

In passing sentence, Judge

In a statement. Chee's co-

against the law. The absence of public disorder at the rally held in the raffles place financial district was a mitigating factor, she said, but added that the sentence "should not be negligible or insignificant."

Chee, 36, served a week in jail earlier this month after refusing to pay a fine of 1,400 Singapore dollars (\$830) on a similar charge resulting from a December speech, also at the raffles place banking centre.

Wong, 61, assisted Chee by holding a speaker and giving him a microphone, which the court also deemed a violation of the public entertainment act. He had been fined for a similar offence in

Chee, speaking in his own defence earlier, had declared readiness to go to jail again as part of a campaign to push the government to relax limits on free

"I don't want to step into prison again. It is democalising and brutalises one's spirit. But (if) I have to spend time in jail to show that I'm doing it for my country, then consider it done." he said.

Chee's Taiwanese-born wife Huang Chih Mei, a fellow psychologist who is expecting their first child over the weekend and

accused, Wong, reiterated he had done nothing wrong.

This is the political situation today in Singapore. This is how the PAP controls society. This is how it treats people that speak up." Wong said.

Chee earlier told the court the

allowed to give political speeches in public places and criticise the opposition?." he added.

The PAP has been in power

party would pursue its cause for democracy in Singapore despite the disqualification of their party

Missouri executes. first inmate since Pope's

> - 1 convicted tamahan 💎 nuted the death there of killer Darry leave last month. It Mease's sentence to the prison after John Paul II made appeal during lanuary visit to the prison of the prison of

PHT1181, Missouri (Alla)

Rodden had asked Carnahan to extend had mercy as well, but said he wasn't counting to it. Vaid Carnahan had luesday: "I find nothing to justify setting side the results of the indicial proceedings." indicial proceedings."-Rodden was sentenced to death for the 198 of Terr Irunnel. Rodden me Trunnel at a bar. the look her back to apartment he shared

whom he also stabbed to death authorities said. Rodden maintaines that Arnold killed Trunnel, and that h killed Arnold in sel defence. Following separate trials. Rodden was for killing Trunnel and life in prison for killing Arnold.

Mease had been sen kneed to die for killie lissouri in 1988. H was also charged with killing two of the man' relatives but was neve fried for those slayings 27 execution date was last November b the State Suprement Four days late the court changed the elecution date to Fel

The court didn't give teason, but man believed it was because the Pope's visit to S with would coincid the Rodden's Rodden's date was scheduled so had left St. Louis 6 % February 25-25-25

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Indonesian students ride atop a bus as they parade through the streets of Jakarta. More than 300 student protestors paraded in a convoy to call for a transitional government to replace that of President B.J. Habibie (AFP photo)

executes

• first inmate since Pope's plea

POTOSI, Missouri (AP) - A convicted killer who sought clemency Gov. after Carnahan commuted the sentence of another death row inmate at the urging of the Pope was executed by injection early Wednesday.

James Rodden, 38, was the first prisoner executed in Missouri since Carnahan commuted the death sentence of killer Darrell Mease last montb. The reduced governor Mease's sentence to life in prison after Pope John Paul II made a dramatic face-to-face appeal during his January vislt to St.

Louis. Rodden had asked Carnahan to extend him mercy as well, but said he wasn't counting on it. Said Carnahan late Tuesday: "I find nothing to justify setting aside the results of the judicial proceedings."

Rodden was sentenced to death for the 1983 murder of Terry Trunnel. Rodden met Trunnel at a har, then took her hack to an apartment he shared with Joseph Arnold, whom he also stabbed to death, authorities said.

Rodden maintained that Arnold killed Trunnel, and that he killed Arnold in self defence. Following separate trials, Rodden was given the death sentence for killing Trunnel and life in prison for killing Arnold.

Mease bad been sentenced to die for killing a man in southwest Missouri in 1988. He was also charged with killing two of the man's relatives but was never tried for those slayings. Mease's original Jan.

27 execution date was set last November hy state Supreme Court. Four days later. the court changed the execution date to Feh.

The court didn't give a reason. but many believed it was because the Pope's visit to St. Louis would coincide with the execution. execution Rodden's date was scheduled on Jan. 29, after the Pope had left St. Louis for

Missouri | Military government decrees terms for civilian president

Any politician or voter

caught giving or accepting

bribes faces a \$60 fine and

Nigeria's electoral com-

mission late Tuesday

expressed serious concerns

that ballot stuffing and

other blatant fraud wit-

nessed by foreign and local

monitors during last week-

end's legislative poll could

resurface in the presidential

checked, (voting irregulari-

ties) will have a negative

impact on the outcome of

not successfully

up to one year in jail.

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — Nigeria's military governmeot Wednesday spelled out requirements for the winner of Saturday's civilian presideotial elections a limited of two four-year terms and disclosure of financial assets before assuming office.

The government of Geo. Abdulsalami Abubakar also set out other election rules, including jail terms and fines for anyone caught offering or accepting The rules were released as

part of Nigeria's draft constitution, which is still being debated and written. The elections are being

contested by retired Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo and former finance minister Olu Falae. The ballot is the climax of Nigena's planned transition to civilian govemment after 15 years of military rule.

The document, which

officials said was prepared the forthcoming presidenlast week, says the winner tial election," said Ephraim of the elections must bave a Akpata, chairman of the simple majority and at least Independent National one-quarter of the votes in Electoral Commissioo.

two-thirds of Nigeria's 36 Obasanjo's Peoples Democratic Party scored states and in the federal capital territory. solid victories in elections If neither candidate fullast Saturday for the 360fills those requirements, a seat house of representanew election will be called tives and the 109-seat senwith the winner being whoever gains the most votes.

With more than 95 per cent of constituencies reporting, the PDP had 206 house seats to the alliance for democracy's 74 and the all peoples party's 68. The PDP won 59 senate seats to the AD's 24 and the APP's

Nigeria bas been ruled by the military for all but 10 vears since independence in 1960.

The latest transition to democracy got underway after Abubakar came to power in June following the sudden death of five-year dictator Gen. Sani Abacba.

Violence again hits Indonesian town, death toll up to 18

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) Soldiers fired on brawling Muslim and Christian gangs Wednesday to an Indonesian town that has been plagued by religious violence. At least 18 people bave died in two days of fighting, local television

reported. Rioters burled homemade bomhs and smoke hillowed from hundreds of burning bouses in the town of Amhon, the capital of Maluku province, which was known as the spice islands in Dutch colonial times.

In a separate clash in East Timor, witnesses said pro-Indooesian militiameo fired on pro-independence supporters, killing two and injuring several others.

Violence between rival groups has escalated io the former Portuguese colooy since Jakarta said last mooth that it was willing to grant it independeoce. Indooesia iovaded East Timor in 1975.

terrified residents, including children and elderly people, fled their homes and sought refuge in hospitals and army and police

As many as 145 people have died in Maluku this year in the worst riotiog since the tumultuous downfall in May of thenpresident Subarto. Indooesia is overwhelmingly Muslim, but the unrest hit areas with large

Deadly turmoil has persisted io the world's fourth most populous nation since riots and protests belped oust Suharto after 32 years of authoritarian rule.

Christian populations.

The unrest has been linked to ecocomic hardship, gang rivalries, armed separatist movements, disputes over political reforms and ethnic and religious tensions.

500,000-member military has been trying to restore order but it has

In Amboo, hundreds of often become the focus of were taken to the army hosrioters' anger. Security forces have been tainted by human rights abuses and links to the old regime. Political uocertainty also

looms ahead of parliamentary elections June 7, which are expected to be the fairest vote in orore than four decades.

But the military, which will retain representation io the legislature, fears unrest between rival political fac-Before dawn Wedoesday,

youths brandishing clubs, knives and swords attacked each other for the second consecutive day in Ambon. Trucks carrying troops rolled up and officers fired on the mohs to disperse thern.

At least three people were fatally shot and 21 others were being treated for hullet wounds at Kudamati hospital in Ambon, paramedic Engel Mainaki said by telephone. At least 10 other people pital in Ambon with wounds from bullets. arrows or gasoline bombs.

Fighting Tuesday and Wednesday has left 18 people dead, said RCTI, a private TV oews station. It cited reports by police and reporters on the scene.

In some areas, youths with knives roamed the streets, stopping cars and demanding to know the religion of the drivers and

passengers. The latest bout of violence bad ebbed by late Wednesday morning, and roads were largely clear in Amhoo, 2,250 kilometres east of Jakarta, the Indonesian capital. Many parts of the city were destroyed in rioting last month.

Police with loudspeakers patrolled in cars, urging people to stay in their homes and lay down their Authorines weapoos. issued similar appeals oo state-owned televisioo.

Germany scraps unpopular plan for dual citizenship

In its second major policy retreat since taking office last fall, the German governmeot bas dropped ambitious plans to offer dual nationality to foreign residents in a bid to better integrate them into society.

Faced with public oppositioo, leaders of the governing coalition of Social Democrats and Greeos agreed late Tuesday to abandon the month-old proposal in order to save a wider effort to modernise Germany's 1913 citizenship law, which is based on blood lines rather than place of birth.

Rightist opponents bave ment plan to make dual passports for foreigners the Mueller, whose party had

expressed regret at the

Western boycott of its inter-

oational heroin conference

as delegates exchanged

intelligence oo drug traf-

ficking in private meetings.

Paul Higdon, director of

Interpol's criminal intelli-

gence unit, said the confer-

ence was going well despite

a boycott by nations includ-ing the United States,

Boycotting oarions said

their presence would bave

implied eodorsement of the

anni-drugs policy of the mil-

itary government in

Myanmar, ooe of the

world's largest sources of

ity wheo people are there," said Higdon, who added that the fight against drugs

"You get a look of solidar-

Britain and France.

Wednesday

YANGON

Interpol

BONN, Germany (AP) — rule rather than the exception.

Chancellor Schroeder has been forced to seek a compromise with the opposition after a state election defeat this month. blamed oo the cirizenship plan, left him without a majority in the upper house of parliameot.

Coalition leaders said the government will negotiate with the opposition to revise the draft law.

It was the second time Schroder's 4-mooth-old government bas bad to publicly backtrack on a . far-reaching policy initia-

Last month, he drasticalcollected some 1 million ly slowed the governsignatures io a petition ment's original plans to Greens leader Kerstin zenship.

pressed to make dual oationality the rule, oow suggested that foreigners who also get a German passport he forced to choose between the two after a certain time, for example five years.

But even such a scaledhack proposal is unlikely to satisfy the rightist opposition, which argues that dual nationality will hinder integration, lead to split loyalties and trigger an immigration wave as oew citizens invite their rela-

Critics of the plan seized on last week's violent protests by Kurds in Germany, arguing that kicking out such militants would be impossible if

tives to join them.

Thousands of extreme for the first time.

rightists plan to March io the eastern city Magdehurg Saturday to protest dual nationality.

Supporters say dual nationality is a solution for many of Germany's 7.3 million foreigners who still have links to their homeland — mainly the more than 2 million Turks living here — and want to keep their old passport.

Even social democratic leaders have conceded, though, that the plan is too radical for many of their voters wbo have less liberal views than the Greens.

One element the governments wants to preserve is that the new law oo longer nes citizeoship to German bloodlines, awarding chil-

world, the United States and

Britain bear special respon-

sibility to work with the rest

of the international commu-

oity in every way possible,"

said Myanmar Home

Affairs Minister Tin Hlaing

Boycotting nations say

Myanmar is oot doing

enough to stamp out drug

trafficking and say the gov-

ernment bas allowed the

profits of illegal narcotics

tradiog to filter into the

at the opening ceremooy.

Hun Sen stresses against Khmer Rouge trial

TOKYO Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Wednesday kept up his opposition to putting Khmer Rouge leaders oo trial for atrocities committed during their "killing fields" rule of Cambodia.

Hun Sen, who is in Tokyo seeking Japanese and international aid for his impoverished, warravaged nation, said critics who argued that aid should be withheld until Khmer Rouge leaders went on trial threatened the peace and stability of

Cambodia. "I want to keep peace and political stability. We can't take (and prosecute) the former presi-dent of the national assembly... and the former prime minister who surrendered (and put them on trial)," Hun

Sen told Reuters. Hun Sen was referring to two top Khmer Rouge leaders who gave themselves up December.

They were Nuoo Chea, a top ideologue who was Khrner Rouge leader Pol Pot's righthand man and served as president of the national assembly during Khmer Rouge rule, and Former Prime Minister Khieu Samphan, who was officially head of state dur-

ing Khmer Rouge rule. Since the two surreodered, Hun Sen, himself a former Khmer Rouge official, has argued that if the Camhodian government arrested the pair, former comrades in previously guerrillaheld zones in the west and north of the couotry would take up arms. "There would be no

meaning in a trial if hundreds of people (of the Pol Pot factioo) stood up as a result of puttiog one or two persons on trial or executing them," Hun Seo was quoted by former Defence Minister Defence Kazuo Aichi as saying in a meeting between tbem.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan bas received a report from three legal experts exploriog ways to bring to trial Khmer Rouge leaders beld responsible for the deaths of nearly million Cambodians during

their reign of terror in A U.S.-based human rights group said last week that the Tokyo meeting was a perfect opportunity to press the government on the

on rights in general. A Japanese government source said Wednesday that Foreign Masahiko Minister Komura would urge buo sen to bring Khmer Rouge leaders to justice when they meet Thursday, Kyodo news

Khmer Rouge issue and

agency reported. But Komura will also underscore Japan's stance that Camhodia needs to carefully consider the trial method while listening to opinions of experts and fully respecting the wish of the Camhodian people. the source was quoted by Kyodo as saying.

A foreign mioistry official declined to comment.

"That is merely an assumptioo," be said. Hun Sen will attend a world bank-sponsored international meeting on aid to Cambodia Thursday and Friday and meet with Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi in hopes of bilateral securing Japanese assistance, including a resumptioo of ven loans that were

suspended 31 years ago. Hun Sen plans to ask aid donors to pledge \$1.3 billioo over the next three years, authoritative sources have

Japanese government sources said 17 aid donors and seven international aid agencies were expected to agree to almost fully meet Cambodia's request at the two-day conference.

national cooperatioo. Of the \$1.3 billioo, But Higdoo and diplomats donors were likely to expressed some discomfort pledge more than \$450 that the meeting's host million for the next Myanmar is home to some year, the sources said. of the world's most notori-Cambodian opposition ous drug lords, who have leader Sam Rainsy, in made immunity deals with

Tokyo to observe the the military government. meetiog, said Hun Sen Khun Sa, the king of the was reluctant to stage a golden triangle drug lords, trial hecause it would and former ringleader Lo put the spotlight on his Hsiog-Han are believed to own Khmer Rouge past. be living under the protec-"These people are protion of military intelligence tecting each other

in Yangon, diplomats said. because any prosecution Khun Sa reached a ceaseof any old Khmer fire deal with the junta in Rouge member will 1996 to end the 20-year inevitably effect and struggle for independence tarnish the reputation of of his Moog Tai army and is (Cambodia's) present now thought to head legitileaders who mate businesses in mining, Khmer Rouge themtransport and agriculture. selves," Sam Rainsy Lo Hsing-Han is now one told Reuters. of Myanmar's most influen-



Interpol bemoans West's

boycott of drugs meet

was best tackled with inter- Paul Higdon (Reuters photo)

nal businessmeo after his arrest in 1973, and amnesty seven years later. "You can say we have two

bad characters who are on the loose," Higdoo told reporters Wednesday. But before the govern-

ment could do anything with heroin, they had to do something with insurgencies. "Sometimes you have to make a pact with the devil," he added. Higdon cautioned against

expecting immediate results from a very "technical" conference of law enforcement officers. "It is a continual process rather than an event which happens." he said.

The three-day conference, which opened Tuesday, has drawn around 70 delegates

eign police non-governmental organisations. Higdon said Australia, which refused to ioin Western boycott of the confereoce, had already picked useful

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They have

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Myanmar Lyndall McLean

said Tuesday that her coun-

important to work towards

Delegates at the confer-

ence Wednesday held talks

oo trafficking routes in

America and Europe.

focused on Southeast Asia,

effort to crack down on

opium production and need-

markets for heroin in the

ed international belp.

enemy is," he said.

united efforts.

Higdon said.

Discussions

economy. Myanmar's economy labours under strict Western sanctioos designed to punish what critics describe as severe human rights violanons and the suppression of tion. "It is the democracy movement of Nobel Peace prize winner Australia Aung San Suu Kyi. on guard.

Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium were also among boycotting countries.

Experts say Myanmar is Australian Amhassador to currently vying with Afghanistan for the dubious title of the world's biggest try had atteoded as it was opium supplier.

The boycott was a disappointment for the government, keen for vindication of its 15-year anti-drugs plan. It is trying to shed its image of a "narco-dictatorship shored up by the

spoils of drug cultivation.

Thailand, Myanmar and

Laos, which all have territothe source for most of the world's opium, which is ry in the notorious "golden processed into beroin. triangle" opium-producing Myanmar has harshly critregion, are represented at icised the boycott, claiming the meeting. it was making a serious

So is China, a boost for international efforts to block trafficking routes out of Myanmar and Laos its southern "As two of the largest through province of Yunnan.

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Cold feet again

THE FAILURE of the six-nation Contact Group, that has been trying desperately to broker a peace deal between the Serbs and the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo at Rambouillet, is a major disappointment for the international community as a whole. The credibility and resolve of NATO to "force" a balanced solution began to erode when the Contact Group's original deadline set for last Saturday came and went without NATO forces going into action. Whatever credibility was left evaporated when the second deadline ended Tuesday, again without NATO delivering on its solemn pledge to punish the party responsible for the deadlock in the marathon peace talks.

The French and British foreign ministers who spoke at the end of the negotiations Tuesday sought to put a brave face on the so-called partial deal that the Contact Group claims was achieved. As a matter of fact, no accord was struck. Neither the Serbs nor the Albanians bave signed anything or committed themselves to anything. The best that the Rambouillet talks can show for is an oral agreement in principle to extend to Kosovo substantial autono-

Belgrade insisted, though, that whatever self-rule the ethnic Albanians would attain will exclude the possibility of holding a referendum to determine the aspirations and political will of the Kosovo people. The so-called partial agreement arrived at merely mentions that the wishes of the Kosovo people will be taken into consideration after the three-year interim period. Naturally, both sides interpret this provision in their own image. The Albanians would like to construe the reference to the aspirations of the people of Kosovo as a licence to exercise self-determination at the end of the tunnel. Belgrade would have nothing to do with such an interpretation. As for the deployment of NATO forces in Kosovo to police any agreement that could be arrived at, the Serbs would go only as far as to express a willingness to "discuss the the Contact Group, what started out as insistence on a NATO force, eroded into a NATO-led force. Soon enough the NATO-led force would erode even further to a multilateral force in which Russia would be a major contributor!

There is no hetter way to describe the outcome at Rambouillet except as a fiasco. A fiasco for NATO and for the ethnic Albanians. With NATO deployment still in doubt and the vetoing of the exercise of the right to self-determination for the ethnic Albanians still in vogue by not only the Serbs but also by the Contact Group, the stage is not set for an agreement by March 15.

Of all the issues being negotiated, we cannot understand how the exercise of the right to self-determination can still he a matter for negotiation. It would have been sufficient to stipulate that the future rights of the people of Kosovo will be respected, promoted and determined in accordance with the charter of the U.N. and other binding conventions to assure them their ultimate political national rights to selfdetermination. How can any country or a group of countries take away a right which is so wellenshrined in the charter of the international organisation and practically every international treaty or convention? The right to self-determination is simply non-negotiable. Yet we see NATO yielding to Belgrade and accepting that it be negotiable as well. That is bow had the implications are of the

Rambouillet negotiating process. **ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES**

Al Ra'i's Taher Adwan said neither the daily American-Briosh attacks on Iraq nor the imposed embargoes on Iraq, Sudan or Libya provokes the wide range of reactions they used to in the Arab or the international arena. He also said that Arabs seem to have become used to the repetitive Israeli aggressions in Palestinian territories and South Lebanon, the last of which was the occupation of the Lebanese city of Amon. But the other side of the story, argued Adwan, is that the Palestinians and Lebanese have learnt how to handle and defend their rights relying on their own resources and potentials, which proved to be more effective than the classical methods of mobilising armies or false slogans of liberation. He added that Iraqis, will follow in the footsteps of their fellow Palestinians and Lebanese brothers and will devise their distinctive means in the face of the new stage to preserve the integrity of their soil. In due course, Western powers and Israel should realise that the only to settle disputes in the region is to abandon military solution and to end

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi quoted Hashem Mahamid, an Arab nominee for the Israeli election, as saying that these election will determine the region's fate. Unfortunately, there is nothing to prove the opposite as the coming Israeli government will control the establishment of peace and settlements, Rimawi added. It is notable that the Arabs are monitoring the elections without trying to affect them or affect the Israeli public opinion. said the writer, adding that the Arabs say they do not want to interfere in the elections, which, in fact, are influencing the Arab interests and rights. Benyamin Netanyahu promises his electors that the peace will not be surfaced, the settlements will be expanded and the "Israeli peace" will be imposed to prevent the Palestinians from determine their fate, according to Rimawi and added that it is obvious that such issues are Israeli internal subjects. Stressing the principles of a comprehensive and just peace, enabling the Palestinians to determine their fate and stopping the settlements are the solutions, said Rimawi.

IBM and the Arab state of affairs

"WHAT DOES IBM stand for?" a puzzle was original, and new to colleague of mine, known for his me. love of practical jokes, asked me the other day. Suspecting that he was laying a trap for me somewhere. I started cautiously to inquire whether he was referring to the IBM we all know.

"No," he promptly and triumpbantly replied, assured that I had oo inkling whatsoever as to what he was about to reveal.

"Well, what does it stand for?" I asked, knowing that I was giving him a great deal of pleasure by sounding so ignorant, curious and interested.

"IBM," be responded eagerly, "stands for Inshallah, Bukra, and Ma'lisb" — Arabic words meaning, respectively, "God willing, Tomorrow, and Never Mind." Generally, my friend's puzzles and jokes are not as interesting as this one; this time, however, his

And it is very profound and per-

We do not want to get into stereotyping ourselves. of course. There are so many unfair stereotypes about people who dwell in this part of the globe that one gets both vexed and upset at times at how easily even intelligent people fall into stereotyping. Of all God's creatures, buman beings are the worst cynics, satirists, offenders and abusers of members of their own species.

In today's Arab culture, there are many anti-IBM individuals ones who respect time, keep promises, and care a great deal about the feelings and needs of nthers. There are many PER's among us: Punctual, Efficient, and Reliable. This should be made

But there also, unfortuoately. still many IBM's among us: people who do not respect time, do not keep promises, and do not show any feeling of guilt vis-a-vis the time they waste and the promises they break.

Originally, Inshallah bad a ooble meaning; with some it still does. Insballah meant (and should mean): I will come, I will do it. etc. no matter what. Today, alas, it

bas come to mean: I may come, I

may do it, etc. (or, worse, I won't

come, I woo't do it, etc.). Bukra and Ma'lish, similarly, had noble meanings. Bukra meant you will definitely do something tomorrow, or will come tomorrow. Today, it is mainly used as either a procrastination tactic or a polite way of saying no. Ma'lisb meant. don't feel too guilty if something

goes wrong (said, of course, to a

person who does feel guilty after

View from **Academia**



Dr. Ahmad Y. Maidoubeh

something goes wroog); today, it means, don't you bother.

IBM, in our society, is a malady: it is a virus that gnaws at us from within, destroying our psyches. polluting our relations, distorting our image, and blocking our

But IBM is a disease spread not only at the individual level but also at the institutional. Many of our public (at times private) insti-

tutions suffer from the same dis-Like individuals in our society some institutions are fairly easy to conduct business with. They are efficient, reliable and respectful of

your time. Many of them. however, are nnt. They never give you a straight answer, never finish anything on time, never keep a promise, never do anything efficiently, never

respect your feelings. In other societies, IBM (the IBM1 has, despite its vices, dooe something noble to humanity at the technological level; io ours IBM is a disaster.

Will things change? Inshallah. When? Bukra. What if they don't?

The right medicine

WITHIN THE general doom and gloom afflicting the Jordanian economy, a few sectors shioe out. One of these is pharmaceuticals, now regularly making up around ten per cent of the value of Jordan's merchandise exports and keeping their place as the country's largest "non-traditional" group of goods sold abroad. (The "traditional" exports of Jordan are potash, phosphates, and fresh vegetables and fruits.) Of course, this is good oews, both in terms of export diversification and the higher value added that comes from such manufactured products as pharmaceuocals, as opposed to raw phosphates or raw tomatoes (though exporting ketchup or processed phosphates is a different

The bad news is that a lot of these medicines are low value items like paracetamol or aspirin, and are also being manufactured and exported by many other developing countries. Algerian and Egyptian products among others are increasingly competing with these and other "geoeric" Jordanian pharmaceuticals in regional and international markets alike.

However, in the cases of the medicines of Algeria and Egypt in particular, transnational giants are taking an active interest io local firms and bave moved technology and capital into these countries. By comparison, Jordan's pharmaceutical producers have not really attracted the serious interest of the world's big medical players.

Jordan needs to innovate to compete both with big regional rivals (and with the rest of the world). In other words, we have to find a method to produce aspirin cheaper than the Egyptians, or to find a oew way to cure headaches. To do either, the country desperately needs to pusb its scientific and technological development. Like most other Arabs. Jordanians are laggards to the international race to create and use innovative technology. Israel on the other hand is a leader, spending about three per cent of its GNP on research and development (R&D). This is a colossal level, far higher than most other countries, even those of the developed West. The comparable figures for Jordan and the rest of the Arab **Developing World**



Riad al Khouri

world are pitiful. On the other band, the oeed for R&D across the board io the economy is decisive, particularly in pharmaceuticals. Medicioes that make fortunes for countries and companies are usually the product of enormous expenditure on R&D.

Typically, a large multinational io the pharmaceutical business might have an R&D budget oot much different than the size of Jordan's annual GNP! So how in the world can Jordanian pharmaceutical firms compete and speod mega-bucks on R&D? In the short ruo of course this is impossible, and for the time being. Jordanian companies will bave to join their equally strong governments.

Whatever happens between Jordanian firms and foreign producers, Jordan will still have to spend more money oo R&D. However, it is obviously asking too much of Jordan in its present economic plight to shift substantial resources to R&D. The basic needs of the population must come first, but in order for Jordan to start being a serious economy, its R&D must get a boost. In a country with scant natural resources and limited financial capital, the human element will have to assume precedence; teaching people the right skills and then making sure that their talents are effectively deployed is an important part of this process. One of the more

woeful pieces of economic news to come out of Jordan io receot months concerned the underemployment of medical doctors, something virtually unprecedented in a normal economy. Another piece of bad news was the receot expulsioo of a large oumber of pharmacists from their syndicate for continuing non-payment of membership dues.

Traditionally, in most places, having a license to practice medicine or pbarmacy is usually a passport to affluence. Not so any more in Jordan it seems. How much better if those Jordanian pharmacists and MDs with time on their bands were retraioed and put to work developing oew medical products or appropriate technologies. Of course this would take planning and finance, but with a little help from Jordan's many friends, it could be done, (Israel's friends, oo the other band, seem to be deserting it; the Israelis have just been booted out of the lucrative EU R&D program, having previously been the only oon-European country in it.)

Ohviously re-employing more or less idle bolders of medical science degrees is just one possibility of how to marry Jordanian scientific skills to the country's R&D oeeds. Not that hands with the big boys, to produce this is gotog to bappen easily, partly under liceose or in some other form because of a lack of vision and will of association. However, even the later by the state-to-put restrictions oo the ter option is going to involve a lot of number of retail pharmacy businesses hard work, particularly if Jordanians and on private medical clinics, and are to avoid the option of pirating the also because the continuing rusb of intellectual property of multioation-als and so falling foul of them and open them. This will have to be changed somehow, and this may be a loog process Meanwhile, my point is that moving scieoce and technology forward in Jordan — as in the rest of the Arab world — is a must, and that it cannot be done without taking R&D more seriously. Once this starts to happen, the right mix of scientists and technologists will start graduation from our universities in order to feed industrial labs with new ideas and new blood. An alternative for pbarmaceuticals in particular is more piracy of foreign iotellectual property, and this - eveo if we were allowed to get away with it, which we most certainly will not - would not be the right medicine for our eco-

Choice and Arab satellite TV

CAIRO WAS the scene of an interesting conference last weekend. The U.K.based Article 19 organisation sponsored a conference on Arab satellite broadcasting. Arab and Western academics spoke for two days about Arab satellites and their future io an Arab world that is still largely run by closed and undemocratic With the exception of a senior executive from the oew Egyptian satellite digital station Nile Sat, none of the Arab television statioo's executives or producers attended.

Article 19 is a non-gov-

organisatioo ernmental dedicated to the advancement of policies and regu-laticos that guarantee the freedom of speecb (which is the 19th claose in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Satellite. as well as the Internet, provide a rare opportunity to peoetrate Arab peoples tight fist oo information for decades. As one speaker deny what is being said on them or counter it by going on the air with their own version. Ooce that bappeos, these countries' total media control is finished. What is more interesting is that some of the new satellite stations are challenging even the dominant Saudibacked wealthy satellite stations and pay-TV channels. Commenting on the most popular satellite statioo Al Jazireb, one of the researchers declared an end to the media cartel. Once one station breaks rank and doesn't toe the line, all the other stations will have to compete and therefore engage with their viewers. Al Jazireb, whose popu-

lar political debate programme Al Itijah Al Muages (the Opposing stream) has been instrumeotal in rocketiog its rating to the top, is still the exceptioo. In a talk I gave on the poor quality of programming on Arab satellites. I angered some of the audience by statiog that most Arab satellite broadcasters are more interested in having their tiny logo on the bottom of the screen than in the programs that fill the entire screen. Every Arab country, no matter how small, feels that being oo satellite is tantamount to international recognition. Some countries have more than once station with little indigenous programmiog.

The amount of money spent on television software is insignificant compared to the amount spent on hardware. One station is reported to have invested \$1 billion in a pay TV cbannel. A Moroccan academic said that his country's production budget is a But the satellite and mere \$1 million. That is Internet revolutions are why Arab television stations are the last place Arab filmmakers go to for funding or broadcast their films. A recent study submitted to the Moroccan parliament showed that more than 60 per cent of the Moroccan people don't

Jerusalem Life



Daoud Kuttab

watch either of the counchannels. Apparently more people in Morocco watch Freoch satellite stations and the Qatar-based Al Jazireh than their national channels. For the first time Arabs are finding out what is bappening in their own country and in the rest of the Arab world without the filters of national broadcasters and ministry of information controllers.

Of course the signifiwhose rulers have kept a scance of this is oot only political. Socially the opening up of the skies has put it, unable to ban this sent many governmental media platform. Arab and civic leaders searching rulers are now forced to for solutions. They are afraid that this uncontrolled openness will cause major social upheavals. One Egyptian researcher said that CNN's success in Egypt was due to the fact that its cable subscription was made along with the popular music channel MTV. A professor from the American University in Cairo told the conference that his students think that all Americans talk with the same profanities as street gangs are heard talking on television. But iostead of accepting these facts and trying to encourage the production of quality programmes some Arab academics tried to defend existing censorship and regulations. One, even went as far as defending protocol news as something that is oeces-sary in the developing world so that the public know what their leaders are doing! Fortuoately these arguments were quickly rebuffed, but the existence of such mentalities among the Arab world's intellectual community is very worrisome. Perhaps one of the most important trends revealed in the conference was related to advertising. Despite the major drop in oil prices, advertising dollars spent on Arab satellite stations has been increasing significantly. In 1998 more than \$300 million was spent just on satellite television advertising. Naturally advertising dollars, which knows oo poli-tics or national pride, wet to the most watched sta-

> Certainly it would be a mistake to expect major change from governmentsubsidised Arab broadcasters just because of ratings giving Arab viewers something new. As loog as Arab governments can't shoot down satellites, or confiscate television remote controls and computer key boards, Arabs will have something they haven't bab before. Choice.

Searc starts

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By Mary Dele

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Letters to the editor

Letter of condolence

I AM one of the million admirers of His Majesty King Hussein, who admired him for his courageousness and fighting spirit. I am one of the Filipinos working here. and I was very sad when I heard the news that His Majesty King Hussein had passed away. While I was watching the TV during his funeral. I couldn't help crying because we lost a very happy, helpful and loving father and king.

To Queen Noor, the Royal Family and all Jordanians, I express my deepest sorrow and heart-felt condolences. My thoughts and prayers are with you.

I pray to God Almighty to give King Abdullah and Prince Hamzah wisdom, courage and sincerity to serve as leaders for the success and the future of Jordan.

> Luvy Subala Amman

IT IS with crying eyes and mourning hearts, full of grief and sorrow, I and all the world received the yet inconceivable death of our mighty King. King of hearts. King of peace. His Majesty King Hussein. It is hard to imagine how we shall not be able to see your beloved face again, or listen to your wise voice anymore. Since our Almighty God took you to him, we bave realised how cruel and unbearable is your absence. How can we forget a King who dedicated his entire life to serve his people, a King who offered endless noble deeds to his home and a genuine peacemaker who believed in the just cause of peace?

Your Majesty, all Jordanians along with people all over the world have prayed for your soul, you will be remembered forever because you made of Jordan an oasis of sta-

bility, dignity and peace. May your soul rest in peace.

Mazen Al Tamimi

I HAVE lived here in Jordan with my family since 1996 and like everyone else we were deeply upset by the death of His Majesty

Today my six year old daughter Polly brought home some words she'd written at school; and I think they sum up how we've all been feeling.

"On Monday I went to the funeral, then we went home and watched the rest on TV. I was very sad because he died. I was so sad that I couldn't go to sleep. The morning came and I was still sad. Then we went for a walk. The whole world was sad." I am sure that none of us will forget the last few weeks and we feel privileged to have been able to be at such a time. Our thoughts are with King Abdullah, Queen Noor and all the Royal

Tudor Lomas and family

WEARE sorry to hear of the death of King Hussein. We would like to express our heartfelt sympathy to you and your country. We wish the best to your new king, King Abdullah. We just want you to know that we are thinking of you at this

Mrs. Cheyney and Tom, Veronica, Nicky, Alix, John, Sam, Sarah, Katie, Jordan, Melody, Cody, Brandon,

Kristen, Sarah, Anthony, Cindy in her second grade

Correction

In the article entitled "Discount toy shops aim to reach more children" it was erroneously reported that average per capita income was ID100 per month. The real per capita income is JD1,400 per year. The Jordan Times apologises for any inconvenience.

المراجع والمحاجب والمحاجب المحاجب المح

By Mary Dejevsky

JUST WHEN you thought that the epic of the president, his girlfriend, his wife and their lawyers had finally played itself out. White House Pictures has come out with an inspirational cliff-hanger of an epilogue. Will the wronged wife take to the campaign trail on her own account? Could she take her place in the very body that voted 50-50 to remove her husband from office? Will Bill, chastened puppydog that he is, redeem himself by cheering her on?

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Jerusalem.

In short, will Hillary Rodham Clinton run for the U.S. Senate? Without a pause to catch their breath, audiences across America are responding: "Yes, Yes and Yes! Go Girl!"

And the lady herself, the object of all this enthusiasm? When the clamour last week became too loud to ignore, she said she would think about it. Or rather, in the delicate wording of a statement issued late last Tuesday. "I will give careful thought to a potential candidacy in order to reach a decision later this year." America, agog for a new thrill after a rollercoaster year, must wait and see.

In this land of great opportunity and great projects, which agonises endlessly about the role of women in public life. there would be something both poetic and heroic about Hillary Clinton running for the Senate — which is exactly why the idea has taken wing. Back in November, when Daniel Pat Moynihan, the venerated Democratic senator for New York State, announced that he would not stand at the next election in two years' time. Clinton's name was not mentioned. To be sure. Moynihan's sear was considered a plum for any Democrat, but it would also he hard fought. The Democrats had just wrested the second New York Senate seat from the tenacious. Republican senator, Alphonse d'Amato. The Republicans, and perhaps even Mr. d'Amato himself, would be desperate to recoup the loss in

Clinton's name flashed on to the screens initially because she had been largely responsible for Al d'Amato's defeat, visiting New York repeatedly to raise funds and campaign for his Democratic rival. She had proved herself an accomplished

elsewhere, throughout last November's congressional elections, raising Democrats' spirits across the country at a time when the future of her husband's presidency — through no one's fault but his own — was in serious question.

What is more, New Yorkers had embraced her with huge enthusiasm at every level: From Democratic Party donors (a crucial constituency) to immigrant taxi-drivers, to suburban housewives. Clinton was admired for her selfstarting toughness, her get-up-and-go, her resilience and independence. The leading lights to the Democratic Party, among them the New Jersey senator Robert Toricelli, noted this affinity and sowed the seed of the idea. After all, New York Democrats needed a celebrity and they needed a winner, and Clinton could be

Clinton initially kept a judicious silence - her husband was, after all, in the middle of being impeached for lying about an adulterous relationship with a White House trainee. Perhaps in frustration, or more probably because the idea was just too delicious to pass over, the bandwagon rolled of its own accord. One seasoned commentator ventured in The New York Times that a "dream contest" for the Senate in 2000 would be Hillary Clinton v Rudolph Guiliani: The tigress wife of the president of the United States versus the buildog Republican mayor of New York City. That was it: So far as the media were concerned, the horses were already at the starting gate. Small matter that neither Clinton nor Mayor Giuliani had announced their intendons. ·

When Bill Clinton was acquitted last week and the Monica Lewinsky affair was consigned to the past, the Hillary-Rudy battle for New York, with its potential for glitz and personality and politicsto-the-death, filled the gap. What had begun as little more than a few quips over cocktails had developed a life of its own. Last weekend's television talk shows, which have thrived for a year oo Bill and Monica, turned their attention to Hillary. With that came endorsements from all

The White House chief of staff, John Podesta, surprised his interviewer by tak-

ing the question seriously and saying be thought that if she ran, she would win. So, no less surprisingly, did Pat Moynihan. A senator of the old school, who was rumoured to be not best pleased that Hillary Clinton might succeed him, and then to be miffed that she was taking so long to make up her mind, he said he thought she would be an excellent candidate and that she would win. The polls give her a margin of five points or more

over Giuliani in a bypothetical contest. Through this crescendo of wishful thinking there has been no suggestion at all that Clinton put herself in the frame for the New York Senate seat, still less that her husband put her up to it. Her political activity in recent years - with the one unhappy exception of her failed health service reform bill - has been to support her husband and Democratic candidates for Congress. Although she was known among her contemporaries at Yale as a formidable political acovist on the left, she gave up campaigning on her own account when her husband first succeeded in his hid for political office in Arkansas, and became the family's main breadwinner instead.

Bill Clinton seems genuinely bemused by the prospect of his wife as senator, but by no means hostile. Answering questions from reporters during his visit to Mexico this week, he said he thought she would make "a terrific senator" if she chose to run, but that the decision had to be hers alone. He said that the thought had "never crossed her mind" before others started mentioning it, and that she had not had time to turn her attention to it - for reasons which he sensibly did not broach. He also said that if she did run, be would support her "enthusiastically" - the first tantalising hint that we could see Bill Clinton singing his wife's praises on the campaign trail next year, paying back some of the loyalty and conviction she has applied to getting him elected over more than two decades.

His ramblings on the subject were almost the first spontaneous utterances he had made on any subject after a year in which his every syllable, dot and comma seemed to have been approved by a dozen lawyers before he spoke.

By yesterday, the spinmeisters at the

White House — who know a good thing when they see one - started to play up the prospect. There was talk of how Bill Clinton saw a reversal of roles as a chance for "redemption," to make it up to his wife for all the burt he had inflicted. More sceptical souls theorised that the togetherness of the Clintons on the mooted New York run provides a welcome carapace for them as they await some of the more gruesome sequels of the Monica Lewinsky affair: Monica's book, Monica's television interviews, Monica's promotional

Hillary Clinton in the running?

It is unprecedented for the First Lady to make a bid for public office — a thing none of her predecessors would have dreamt of - still less, except perhaps in the case of Eleanor Roosevelt, be qualified for. But in a revealing contribution to the question of his wife's prospects in New York, the president said that she had not yet had time to talk to the people who thought she should run, and - "perhaps more important - to those who think she shouldn't."

No one doubts Hillary Clinton's starnina or her resilience. She has demonstrated both in ample measure over the years she has been in the White House, especially in the past year. She has proved too, her capacity to fight, and she has no weaknesses in the field of policy. Unusually for a woman, especially a woman in Ameri-can politics, she has surmounted the appearance factor. People listen to what she has to say now, without first appraising her hair, her make-up or her suit.

And boy, would she need that resilience. If she chose to run, she would face unpleasant questions of a personal and political kind. There would doubtless be men, and women, who would ask whether she had "failed" as a wife. Her political skill would be called into question, especially her plans for health reform which failed, in part, because of her naiveté about the need for political consensus.

All the investigations of the past years would be revisited: the Whitewater land deal in Arkansas which lost money she invested; the spectacular gains she made on a cattle futures investment courtesy of a family friend; and the "Travelgate" affair in which she was blamed for the House office travel staff. Despite exhaustive investi-

gations of each of these and the formal questioning of Clinton on her role in Whitewater - no charges have been brought. The independent prosecutor. Kenneth Starr, even conceded during the Lewinsky investigation that his other Clinton inquiries had so far turned up nothing incriminating. Even if the First Lady is in the clear, however, more of the mud may have stuck to her name than to that of her bus-

While this may presage a difficult and contendous campaign, there is no suggestion that Clinton would crumple. After all, what unknown hor-

band so far as money matters

are concerned - if only

because she was the lawyer

and main investor in these

rors can a political campaign hold compared to those of learning of your husband's infidelity, detail by gruesome detail, in the full glare of the world's

The two bigger questions about Clinton's candidacy are propriety and winnability of a First Lady running for elected office while her husband is still president is obviously untested, but could produce tricky conflicts. Who pays for her transport and security? Is she travelling as First Lady or as candidate? What if her policy pitches conflict with those of her busband, who will be out campaigning not just for her, but for his current Vice-President, Al Gore?

The bigger question is whether Hillary can win. This winter she is riding as high as any First Lady ever. The voters, with the memory of her heroism in the Monica Lewinsky scandal fresh in their minds, are falling at her feet. Party fund-raisers see dollar signs in her eyes. Almost two years, though, is a very, very long time in American politics. The mood of the country could change. If it turns against her husband, it could turn against her. New York



Unusually for U.S. politics, people listen to what Hillary Clinton has to say now, without first appraising her hair, her make-up or her suit (File photo)

could drop her as capriciously as it emhraced her. She lacks any local power base, and her stated support for a Palestinian state last year alienated many Jewish voters.

For an "ordinary" candidate to fight and lose would be no dishonour. But the loss to Hillary Clinton from failure could be greater. To run for New York, she would he sacrificing the other opportunioes to raise money, to earn money, to support good causes - that will come her way when her term in the White House ends. To lose in New York could reduce her "price" and limit her opportunioes. It could also close two other Senate doors that might open after ber husband leaves office: In her home state of Illinois and her

adopted state of Arkansas. Just this once, though, the canny and cautious Clinton might throw caution to the wind, seize the moment, and run for New York, Hillary for senator against the backdrop of the Statue of Liberty. Bill leads the cheers. What a poster, what a campaign pitch, what a race. Run, Hillary,

- The Independent.

Search for alien life starts here on Earth

By Maggie Fox

NASA'S SEARCH for life heyond the planet may stretch to Mars and Jupiter's mooos, but it will start in the depths of the Earth, scientists involved in the project said on Monday.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's new Astrohiology Institute

— a "virtual" institute linking 11 different lahs via the Internet - has come up with its official road map for the search for life.

Laid out before a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Anaheim, California, the map shows a convoluted course that wends its way through super-hot undersea vents, deep into the frozen Aniarctic and through oceans before sbooting off loward Mars and Europa, one of Jupiter's moons, and beyond.

"Now we have completed a NASA road map for astrohiology," said David Morrison, director of space at the NASA-Ames Research Centre at Moffett Field. California.

"It's simply the study of life in the Universe. It is a question of what was the origin and evolution of life, is there life on other worlds, and what is the future of life on Earth and in space." Morrison told a news confer-

"The premise is that the space programme has reached a point at which we can begin to answer these questions." The Astrohiology Institute is carefully separated from the nongovernmental Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence Institute, known as SETI. NASA had launched a similar project in 1992 but less than a year later Congress put an end to what it considered expensive foolishness.

Now the new institute has secured \$9 million for this year and \$20 million for 2000 to try to determine under what condidoos life can survive and thrive, whether these cooditions do or ever did exist elsewhere in the solar system, and whether earthlings can make it out there in space.

Biologists, chemists, astronomers, physicists and a range of other specialists will team tip for what NASA is billing as a unique effort to answer such weighty questions.

They will study the surprising findings that creatures can live in above-boiling temperatures in places like deep undersea sulpbur vents and the thermal springs of Yellowstone Park, as well as at enormous pressures deep under the Earth's surface, and in what look like frozen wastes at the Earth's poles.

"There are environments on Earth where life does not exist, but not many," said Jonathan Trent of NASA-Ames. He is most interested in the microbes and other small creatures living in the oceans, and points out that 75 per cent of the planet is covered by

"An unbiased exploration of the planet for life would unquestionably begin in the oceans." he said.

The possibility of oceans on Mars and Europa are what make those locations good candidates for a search for life. Mars obviously has no ocean now, but might bave once, while the Galileo space mission found evidence there might be a subsurface ocean sloshing around on Europa.



All of the scientists are clear about what they are looking for, and it is not little green men (File graphics)

could have been as many as five habitable planets in the solar system," David Des-Marais of NASA-Ames said.

Venus might have been hahitable before its ruoaway greenhouse effect turned it into a steamy caldron, while Chiron, an asteroid near Pluto that was recently promoted to planet status, also has the potendal for a liquid ocean, DesMarais said.

Jack Farmer, an Arizona University geologist whose team will belp direct future Mars missions to collect soil samples, said his group will look for "an ancient fossil record for an early period of Martian history when

"There has been an estimate that there we think life might have been possible." All of the scientists are clear about what they are looking for, and it is not little green men.

"Our strategy for looking for life elsewhere would be exactly like looking for life on Earth," Morrisoo said. He pointed out that most of the species of Earth - in numbers and in mass — are microhes.

"We won't bother with these strange little creatures with legs walking about on the surface. We will look for creatures that really matter - the microbes.

For more information, the Institute has a web site at astrobiology.arc.nasa.gov

21st century movie stars to go digital

By Maggie Fox

NO MORE artisoc disagreements. No more demands for multimillion-dollar contracts or fights over top hilling. The movie star of the 21st century will be a perfectly obedient computer programme, predicts an executive at Wait Disney Co.

America's scienofic community got a sneak preview of this future late on Thursday - an innocuous-looking cyber-geek named Monty. which can move its cartoon character lips in anatomically correct synchronisation as it voices sentences typed live into a laptop computer.

So far the voice still sounds a little synthesised. But Eric Haselone, senior vice-president for research and development at Wali Disney Imagineering, said computer images like Monty promised to take the movie industry into whole new dimensions.

"Simulation is allowing us to replace the real world and improve the real world," he told the annual meeong of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Ana-

'Simulation is allowing us to replace the real world and improve the real world'

Some of this is already being done. For examples, scenes in the recent movie "Titanic" showing the ship from afar used computer-generated characters on the decks. 'Those people would normally have been extras," Haseltine said.

Computer-generated dinosaurs were used in the film "Jurassic Park," and a computer-generated elephant starred in "George of the Jungle." Computer generation is often used to create virtual sets and sound effects.

But currently, a director must work with a technician to get computer-generated characters to work. With the new programme, the director can work directly with the "talent." Monty, created by Beaverton, Oregon-based Fluent Speech Technologies, can not only

speak as directed, but can emote.

"Look sad," Haseltine commanded, and Monty's lips turned down in good emulation of a human frown as it said: "I'm sad." Anger comes in degrees, either by voice command or with the touch of a computer mouse.

Haseltine said such characters would never replace real actors in the most important roles. "This kind of technology isn't about replacing what was before - it's about creating something new," he said.

"TV did not replace radio. Motion pictures did oot replace theatre... Maybe a new medium will be created," he told reporters.

As if movie-themed fast-food meals, toys and comic books were not enough, those characters will one day appear on the Internet, entertaining their fans long after the film has disappeared from the cinemas, Haseltine said.

"The main character, Monty, could have a life afterward," Haseltine said. "I can take that character and put it on the Internet, put it on a CD." That would not necessarily be for purely entertainment value, he added. "A kid needing belp with his homework could go to Monty and since be's already bonded with Monty, he'll

have a motivation," Haseltine said. "The kids can learn from somebody they already like." He promised it would be realistic.

"It used to be that artists had to fake it." Haseltine said. But new technology lets animators create effects that precisely mimic the real world, allowing images of animals and humans to move in completely realistic ways, images of water to reflect light according to the laws of physics, and shadows to fall precisely the way real shadows do.

With powerful new computer chips — which Haseltine points out were designed mostly to drive computer games, with their memory-eating graphics - such technology can fit into a desktop computer.

"The Steven Spielberg of the future can sit down at a computer, write the script, create lighting, makeup, wardrobe... shoot the picture... do the editing... and even the distribution," Haseltine said.

"The distinction between television and Internet and cinema is going to begin to blur." Movies will no longer be the realm of a few exalted directors. "Lots of people are going to have a voice in cinema," Haseltine said.

Of zeroes and ones

Jean-Claude

COMPUTERS ARE digital machines, that is to say they

chip talk

can only process numbers. Even if you see a stunning colour photograph on the screen or hear divine stereo music coming out your PC, inside all these images and sounds are but zeroes and ones. If computers are about numbers I thought of using some this week to illustrate how far the world of personal computing has

come in the past few years. The average hard disk capacity, the main place where we permanently store programmes and any "work" we do with a PC, has grown from 10MB (megabytes, million hytes or characters) in 1985 to 6GB (gigabytes or billion bytes) in 1999. That's 600-fold! In the same period, the price per megahyte has fallen from 100 dinars to 35 fils, and that's no misprini!

The printing resolution of the hest laser prioter in 1987 was 360 dpi, or dots per inch. in hlack only. Naturally the higher the resolution, the sharper the printous. Now 1200 and 1440 dpi are common, and in full, glorious

Perhaps computers' processing power and speed constitute the most impressive indicator of the dramatic evolution of the technology. From a "mere" 20 million instructions per second in 1987 for 286-PC, we have moved up to more than one hillion for a Pentium II-450 in 1999. The leap is even more important than what these figures indicate for the actual effect of one single Pentium II instruction is much superior to that of a 286-PC. The real performance has been boosted more than 500 times. As for CD-ROM drives, their speed has progressed from a factor 4, less than ten years ago, to 40 this year.

A business analyst recently wrote in an international American weekly that had the Rolls-Royce price followed the same curve as PCs, a Silver Shadow model would now cost less than one euro.

With technical characteristics developing further and further every few weeks and prices falling to incredible lows, a Pentium 450 can hardly he put in the same category as a good old 286. From the user's perspective, the difference io speed and performance while certainly noticeable, is not as spectacular as figures seem to tell us. This is because the new operating systems (Windows 95, 98, etc.) put a very heavy load on the PC and take a good part of its processing power. We may he enjoying more trendy, sophisticated applications, like the Internet, digital sound and image processing. But we are not doing it much faster than before.

Jean-Claude Elias can be reached by e-mail at jeanclaude@nets.com.jo

Lebanon minister sees quick utility sales

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon could begin privatisation of water and electricity utilities within months, its oil, electricity and water minister Sleiman Traboulsi has said.

Traboulsi, who said a detailed listing of assets had begun and would take only 20 days to complete, believes neither utility needs major restructuring before starting privatisa-

"Once the law is decided and promulgated, the ministry is ready," he told Reuters in an interview. "We went through the necessary preparation of human resources and the execution processes that are necessary to privatise." "We will be ready and we are waiting only for the law." he said, dismissing estimates by financial analysts that privatisation of major state assets would take several years. "It

won't take years," he said.

"I think a few months."

Privatisation is high on the agenda of the govern-ment that took office in December, with the proceeds earmarked for reducing a public debt exceeding annual gross domestic product.

The precise plans are being overseen by a cabinet committee composed of its most powerful members — three of them. including Prime Minister Salim AJ Hoss, are economists and the fourth is a businessman.

The committee does not include Traboulsi although water and electricity, along with telecommunications, are the largest assets that could be put up for sale.

A draft law, which actually follows on from proposals under the previous government of Rafik Al Hariri, could face stiff political opposition. It is expected to provide for controls over the sale and subsequent supervision of

the privatised services. Trahoulsi would not say how he foresaw privatisa-

tion taking place in utili-ties, talking only of "pri-vate participation" that for Lebanon's needs. might be only in parts of

the business. "The state has set up five independent water authorities that cover all of Lebanon and which are very effective, be said. "They operate on a com-mercial basis which will looked at separately.

ities to be privatised." "We are waiting for the draft law to be approved. Once it's ready it will introduce the possibility of private sector participation if necessary," he said.

enable some of their activ-

He added that the electricity ministry bad "excellent" facilities that would soon reach production of 2.100 megawatts, enough **Exchange Rates**

"We have a draft law that will allow for the privatisation of different parts of the electricity industry," he said, explaining that production, transmission and distribution were

However, Traboulsi said the utility did bave debts of \$1.4 billion, mainly from investment. He said the electricity ministry was tackling its bestknown failure - receiving only 50 per cent of expected revenue because of loss, theft and refusal to

IMF says Kuwait coping well with oil price decline

WASHINGTON (R) есопотіс Appropriate policies and a cushion of oil-related assets have left Kuwait well placed to cope with the impact of sharp oil price declines. the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said.

The IMF's annual report of the Kuwait economy said that the macro-economic position of the oilrich state bad been improving. Inflation fell to 0.5 per cent in 1998 from 0.7 per cent in 1997 and 3.6 per cent in 1996.

"Executive directors noted with satisfaction the improvement in Kuwait's overall macroeconomic situation in 1997, particu-

larly the low inflation rate and the strengthening of fiscal and external balances," the IMF said.

"They commended the authorities for their prudent approach toward the utilisation of the country's oil wealth, which had enabled the rebuilding of foreign assets for future generations," it added.

The IMF also urged Kuwait to step up efforts to cut subsidies and curb the growth of wages. Planned privatisation efforts would "enhance economic efficiency" and improve the restructuring of the budget, the IMF

The IMF gave no growth

forecasts for 1999 but said the non-oil economy grew 2.0 per cent in 1998, down steeply from 3.9 per cent 1997. Economic growth, including the oil sector, was 2.2 per cent in

1998 and 2.5 per cent in

Meanwhile, a parliamentary study said Kuwait is expected to have an accumulated actual deficit of almost five billion dinars (\$16.5 billion) over the next four fiscal years to

Parliament's finance committee said "actual targeted accumulated deficit which needs to be financed is 4.992 hillion dinars

between the fiscal years

1998/99 and 2001/02," Al Anba daily reported.

The government, which bas already ordered cuts in the 1998/99 (July-June) budget, has presented the elected parliament with an amhitious reform plan which would raise the cost of living by lifting some subsidies and increasing non-oil income through new charges.

Parliament bad earlier passed a law obliging the state to refer any hikes in rates for some basic services to it, but parts of the reform plan do not fall under that requirement.

The government could move in the meantime to raise import tax on some commodities and charges for services like airport departure tax, residency and work permits, driving licences and increase fuel prices.

The 4.362 billion dinar 1998/99 budget carries a projected net deficit of 1.919 billion dinars and a gross deficit of 2.163 billion dinars. OPEC member Kuwait is facing economic hardships in the current fiscal year due a sharp drop in world oil prices.

Domestic debt according to official figures was 4.36 billion dinars, or 47 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), at the end of June 1998, the finance

India predicts 5.8% growth amid fiscal deficit concerns

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's economy is projected to grow at 5.8 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 31, the government said Wednesday in a survey that called for an "urgent" reduction of the fiscal deficit.

The provisional economic growth figure was higher than the five per cent posted in fiscal 1997-98 but below the government's budgeted target of seven per cent.

The ministry's economic survey for 1998-99 said higher if not for the effect of the Asian financial meltdown on world import demand and international capital markets.

But it would still be one of the highest growth rates posted in Asia at a time when many countries are struggling to emerge from recession. It would be behind China's 7.8 per cent growth in 1998 and match Vietnam's 5.8 per cent.

The improvement on last

year's growth was antibuted to a rebound in agriculture and allied sectors.

The survey sounded alarm bells about India's widening deficit, saying it was unlikely the government would stay inside the revised budget target of 5.1 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) for the current fiscal year

The survey gave no esti-mate for the final deficit, although the size of the shortfall in the nine months to December 1998 was up 77.1 cent year-on-year at \$17.5 billion.

"With continuing shortfalls in collections of indirect taxes due to sluggisb growth in industrial production and imports, it is unlikely that the year-end fiscal deficit would be contained within the budgeted amount," it wanted. The June 1998 budget had

originally targetted a deficit of 5.6 per cent, but that was revised to 5.1 per cent following a readjustment in the GDP base figure.

"There is an urgent need to improve the overall quality of fiscal adjustment ... by changing the composition of expenditure towards investment and restraining the growth in revenue expendi-

ture," the survey said.
The survey warned the rising deficit coupled with market borrowings could lock the government into a spiralling debt crisis. Reacting to the survey, the

Confederation of Indian (CII) president, Rajesb Shah, said it was "alarming" that almost one third of fiscal revenue was being used for debt servicing.

"The government's heavy borrowing has bas exerted a tremendous upward pressure on interest costs, as well as constraining economic activity and growth in the private sector." Shah said.

Industrial output faitered with growth falling to 3.5 per cent between April-December 1998 as against 6.7 per cent in the same period last

The slowdown in industrial growth may be attributed primarily to a slackening in aggregate demand," the survey said.
This includes factors such

as falling export growth due to an overall slump in world trade compounded by an erosion in the competitive advantage of Indian exports on account of a steep depreciation in east Asian currencies," it added.

The trade deficit widened by \$7.3 billion for the nine months to December 1998. year-on-year export growth dropping 2.9 per cent and imports rising 7.1 per

"Our exports are repeatedly under attack on the garb of subsidies and dumping, and therefore there is an imminent need to retrusture our incentive schemes so as to make them WTO consistent," said CII President Shah,

The survey also expressed concern over the decline in foreign direct investment inflows at \$880 million in the first nine months of 1998, compared to \$4.3 billion in the same period the previous

India's annual inflation rate was put at 4.6 per cent as of Jan. 30 1999, down from 5.3 per cent the same time last

"Average inflation for the whole of 1998-99 will, bowever, be higher than the 4.8 per cent registered in 1997-98," the survey said.

Farming was the key factor pushing economic growth in 1998-99, with the agriculture and allied sectors expected to witness a 5.3 per ceot increase in production.

The agricultural sector employs 64 per cent of workforce and accounts for 29.4 per cent of gross domestic product.

Unemployment, most serious problem for Iranian youth — Rafsanjani

TEHRAN (AFP) — Unemployment is the most serigovernment will have to population "are considerous problem for Iranian youth in an economy deeply in the grip of a recession, former Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani

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bas said. "Unemployment is the most serious problem facing young people today and in coming years," said Rafsanjani, who is now a top adviser to Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

According to official statistics, about two million young Iranians are currently

generate some 10 million new jobs in coming years to meet demand.

RANCE FRAN

Rafsanjani said the country, currently hard hit by a recession prompted by plummeting oil prices, "will bave trouble ensuring there are enough jobs for young people in coming years." Rafsanjani who served

two terms as president from 1989 to 1997 told a seminar on youth that "the job market will be faced with a mass of school leavers."

The young, who consti-

THE BETTER HALF

ably more demanding than

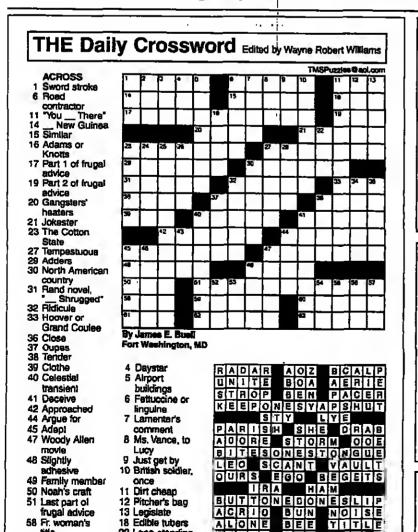
in the past," he warned.
"If we don't respond to their demands and answer their questions, they will drift away from Islam and the Islamic revolution," be

added. But Rafsanjani voiced opnimism that 'Iran is a strong country and will end up resolving the unemployment problem."

Iran has one of the youngest populations in the world, with half the total aged 20 years or under.

By Glasbergen

GLASBERGEN



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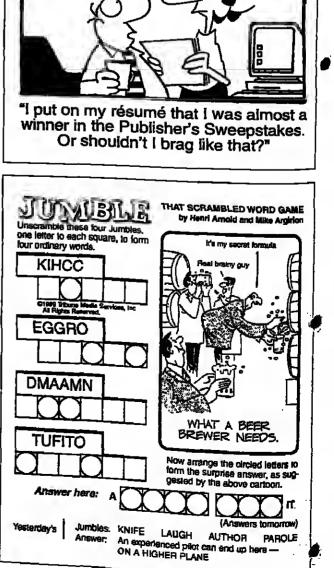
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hing at the right time. houghful You know where

A review of news from the Arabic Press

'It is illogical to have 11 agricultural ministers within a period of 15 years'

** ACCORDING TO Kheir Eddin Shukri, board chairman of the Jordanian society which groups producers and exporters of fruits and vegetables, the most important requirement necessary to improve the marketing of produce is for the government to financially support the Agricultural Marketing Organisation (AMO). He said the organisation's budget does not suffice its administrative requirements although the AMO employs a large number of qualified personnel.

The chairman also highlighted the need to formulate a mechanism to implement the AMO's law and to immediately implement the five decisions issued by the organisation as they would have a major effect on organising this important sector (the five decisions were not specified in the report). "The agricultural product belongs to the farmer until it reaches the border where it becomes the property of the state and is exported under the name: Jordanian products." he said.

Finally. Shukri stressed the importance of adopting a clear and fixed agricultural policy to improve the performance of marketing process. "It is illogical that eleven ministers take the agricultural portfolio during 15 years," he exclaimed.

Asked about the main issues that the society is following up he mentioned the specifications and standards of boxes and other packaging matters which have importance in organising the sector. Another issue concerns allowing foreign refrigerated trucks returning from the Saudi border to load Jordanian produce to European markets because of the lack of suitable Jordanian trucks to carry out the

Shukri concluded by saying that the society is contacting the concerned parties to establish a permanent exhibition for fruits and vegetables where it would be possible to sell directly to the consumers in order to lower prices on the public and achieve rewarding income for the producers. The exhibition, he indicated, would open the opportunity to exporters and importers to promote the produce locally and abroad (Al Dustour).

Islamic Bank posts JD4.4m net profit

** THE JORDAN Islamic Bank for Finance and Investment posted a JD4.4 million net profit in 1998, 40 per cent higher than the net profit registered in 1997. Board Chairman Mahmoud Hasoubeh said the board of directors has recommended to the general assembly the distribution of JD2.2 million in dividends at a rate of 10 per cent. The bank's retained earnings from 1997 total around JD2 million.

Hasoubeh said the bank's total assets at the end of last year amounted to JD706.8

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million, JD56 million more than the 1997 total. He added that the bank's financial investments amounted to JD481 million and that the profit from mutual investment increased by JD3.5 million to JD34.4 mil-

Noting that the bank last year completed raising its capital to JD22 million, Hasoubeh indicated that the shareholders' equity stood at JD50.25 million at the end of 1998. Total deposits reached JD596,6 million, JD44.7 million higher than the figure in 1997 (Al Arab Al Yawm).

Germans

billions on

vacations

STUTTGART. Germany

(AFP) — Germans are

spending tourists in the world, having paid out

around 42 billion euros

(\$49 billion) on their vacations last year, the

head of a tourism trade

The amount of cash

Germans spent abroad in

1998 was six per cent

more than they had spent

in 1997, said the direc-

The top destination for

Europe's biggest econo-

my was Spain, which played host to 8.3 mil-

lion Germans last year.

an increase of 7.3 per

cent over the previous

Other favourite vaca-

(5.7 million

tion spots were, in order:

Germans), Austria (4.2

million) and France (2.4

million).

from

tor, Walter Gehring.

holidaymakers

show here has said.

spend

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FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1999

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You've got a grand trine in water signs, which brings out your gentle, nurturing side, if you happen to have one. If not, you could get irritated when conditions like these are in effect. It seems like everybody's being really wimpy. A little of that goes a really long way with you, but today, try to be nice. It'll be good for you.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Some things you tried vesterday that didn't work will go smoothly oow. You'r didn't really waste that time. It was useful, but perhaps for reasons you hadn't expected. Isn't it strange the way that happens? Well, no point in wondering about why. Just go ahead and push while you've got the advantage.
GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You might get a raise

today, or a better job. You've probably already done the work to establish yourself as an expert in the field. Now, all you need to do is let other people know that you want to be rewarded. You'll get away with being a little aggressive. You might even get a standing ovation for tooting your own hom.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) Yesterday was a struggle, but today should go smoothly. Looks like you've set things up to take advantage of an opportunity, and that's exactly what will happen. You not only have the talent necessary, but you also have friends in high places. One in particular is going to give you a boost that could push

you over the top. LEO: (July 23 to August 22) Looks like quite a bit of money could be riding on how you handle a tough situanon. It won't be enough that you do your job well. You'll also have to be nice about it. Politeness is almost worth more than accuracy right now. So don't argue. The positive impression you make now could benefit you in more

ways than you can imagine. VIRGO: (August 23 to September 22) You hardly ever play hooky, but today the temptation is great. If you could start your weekend early, that would be perfect. If not, a long lunch hour may have to do. In any case, conditions are perfect for playing, and a new game is suggested. You could turn out to be a natural at something you've never done before.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) This is a good day to advance in your career, and if you're going to do it, be nice. Look nice, smell nice, dress nice and act nice. Being pleasant will get you more points than just about anything else. This can't be phony nice, either, It's got to be genuine. They'll be able to tell.

SCORPIO: (October 24 to November 21) Today your bread will land buttered side up. You'll find a parking spot right in front of the store and the cop behind you on the freeway is actually after the guy in front of you. Don't waste this wonderful day on trivia, think of something magnificent you want to achieve, and make a start on it. SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Money is not a topic you like to have your head full of. but every once in a while you have to think about it, and this could be one of those times. You have skills that are definitely marketable, and some probably aren't being marketed right now. There's an opportunity out there; all you have to do is find it.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) Today's focus is on the areas of partnership, friendship and education, so you'll be meening new people, making new friends and possibly even forming new partnerships. Your relationships can help you do your job better. Somebody out there would really like to play with you, and it would

make your life easier to let that happen. AQUARIUS: tJanuary 20 to February 18) You could get more money for the work you do, especially if you put together a good case. You'll have to prove to the boss that you're generating income and you require a larger percentage. It's not going to be that hard to do, because it's probably true. Give it a try. The celestial influences are in

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) This is one of your best days all year. You've got luck in love, travel and selfesteem. You're looking good, feeling great, saying the right thing at the right time, doing everything perfectly. You're wise, generous, warm, loving, considerate, thoughtful. You know what else? You're appreciated. Bask in it.

Oil supply slowdown cannot save 1999 price

in oil supply growth is not coming fast enough to prevent an even deeper price crisis for oil producers this year, a Reuters poll of industry expens has found.

Asian economies are too depressed to siphon off a stubbom global stock glut and suffering producers will have to cut more output just to get prices back to last year's sunken level, the pundits said. A survey of 20 top analysis forecast an average of just

LONDON(R)—A slowdown \$12.61 a barrel for international benchmark Brent this year even less than last year's 22year low of \$13.34.

The latest outlook is a downward revision of nearly a dollar from a similar survey in December after Brent's brief January rally above \$12 has quickly tailed off.

Mild winter temperatures have now switched the spotlight back on export group OPEC, whose November failure to further its 2.6 million barrels per day (bpd) output cut

single digits for the first time in 12 years.

"Our \$13 prediction is based on an assumption that OPEC will some time this year cut actual production by up to another million bpd," said Mike Barry of London's Energy Market Consultants.

'They've got to enforce the existing agreement in full and cut another 500,000 bpd. If they don't prices are heading even lower," he added.

Almost all agreed that OPEC

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package condemned Brent to will have to cut again at some President Hugo Chavez' point in 1999 as the social impact deepens from their shrunken oil revenues.

But any new cut at the group's March 23 meeting will hinge on resolving Saudi-led disaffection with Venezuela and Iran over their poor compliance with existing curbs.

Iran's dispute over its production allocation can only be resolved by Iranian President Mohammad Khatami's March visit to Saudi Arabia.

Wednesday,24-02-99

And while new Venezuelan

instincts lead him towards further cuts, many expect him to yield to pressure to open the

Industry consultants were more pessimistic than banks about the chances of a price pick-up, forecasting on average

\$11.87 for this year. • Yet OPEC may find some comfort as the price crash closes unprofitable output, in the North Sea and especially the United States and Canada.

"The fact is that \$10 oil is just not sustainable for a long period of time," said Mehdi Varzi of Dresdner Kleinwort Benson Bank. We're aleady seeing supply growth curtailed and the number of rigs actually in oper-ation has virtually halved."

Most analysts now expect a trifling 100,000 bpd of supply growth outside OPEC this year, less even than a 200,000 bpd gain in 1998.

But it will take at least another year for swingeing budget cuts now being made by oil firms to take their full toll on swollen crude supply.

In the meantime demand growth is not strong enough to drain the mass of spare oil in world storage tanks.

Asia — before last year the engine for almost all oil market growth - is showing only the first shoots of a recovery, with economists particularly downbeat about demand in regional giants Japan and China.

A further downturn in Brazil would tamish demand prospects still further. Philip Verleger of PKV Associates cautions that prices could average well below \$10 in the notoriously weak second quarter.

Much again rests on Iraq. whose 700,000 bpd increase in exports over the course of last year wrecked the cutback efforts of its OPEC fellows.

Iraqi exports under the U.N.'s oil-for-food programme have almost entirely escaped disruption from renewed hostilities with the U.S and Britain since late last year.

All-out conflict could yet cut traqi exports altogether and send prices skyward at a stroke. But Washington's increased cooperation with a \$300 million U.N. repair programme is more likely to swell Iraqi exports still further this year. The outlook for 2000 is

slightly stronger. Expectations of further deceleration in non-OPEC supply growth and a slow rebound in Asia's economic fortunes push Brent to a forecast average of \$14.47. Yet some analysts also

believe that the possible fall-out from the "millennium bug" could give prices a sudden lifeline at the turn of the year if failing computers scythe supplies.

"You just cannot quantify what sort of impact there is going to be from the Y2K bug." said Peter Bogin of Paris-based Cambridge Energy Research Associates.

"But the psychological impact as we head towards December 31 could well lift prices as people just won't know what surprise might be round the corner," he added.

Amra Forum Hotel

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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1999

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) There are several squares in effect today. That's when the moon or a planet is at 90 degrees to another one, causing a blockage in the energy pattern. Today, we're going to have one in communications and hard work. Something you say is likely to be misunderstood, or a

job might have to be done over again. Be careful.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Pay attention not only to what you're doing, but also to what the other people are doing. Your intuition should be excellent right now. You can also trust your education. Skills you've been learning recently can be put to good use. Don't wait until you've got the credentials. Go ahead and try the theory.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Today could be a challenge.

and not just for you. Looks like it starts out with a breakdown in communication. This is not all that unusual, actually. But today, you might be amazed to see how big a gap there is between what was said and what was head.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) Things that were easy yester-

day could go awry today, so don't take anything for granted. Make sure the people helping you understand what they're supposed to do. A breakdown in communication would be the most likely cause of an accident or glitch in the work schedule. Not your fault, buy why get into it if you don't have to? LEO: (July 23 to August 22) Proceed with caution today. A

simple misunderstanding could get blown out of proportion. If there's money involved, its even more likely to happen. Best not to sign any contracts today for just that reason. You could be thinking the contract says one thing, while the other guy thinks it says something completely different. VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Looks like somebody

has pinned their hopes and dreams on what you can provide. Not to worry. You're very good at what you do, Go ahead and accept the applause as readily as you do your own criticism. Take credit for something you've done well and don't be the slightest bit nervous about it. LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You're probably about

ready to let your hair down. Just be careful where and when. You don't want to go out of character in front of the wrong audience, and you sure don't want to make fim of somebody you were just kissing up to. That's always in poor taste, and today it could cause you to lose everything you've recently

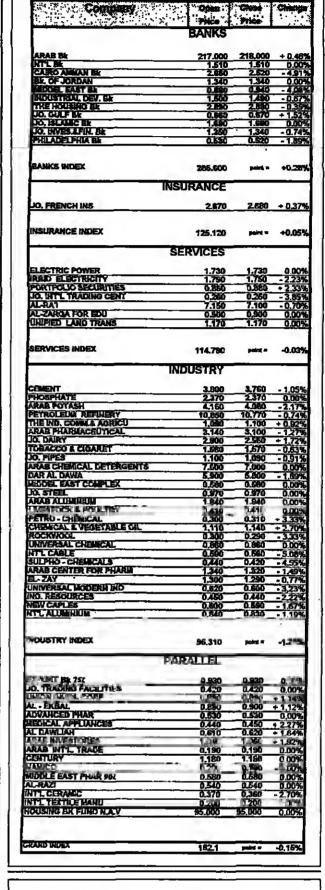
gained.
SCORPIO: (October 24 to November 21) Finish old stuff today, rather than beginning new. Looks like there's going to be a stumbling block that you can't really plan for. As you know, the only difference between a stumbling block and a steppingstone is perspective. You can turn this to your advantage, but it might take a little thought. Apply that thought earlier rather than later.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You have an interesting weekend ahead of you. Take extra care to go over every step of your agenda carefully. Check everythis and off your list. Ask others if everything that needs to be done has been done, then follow up and make sure.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) You could come up with a brilliant idea today, something so obvious you wonder why you didn't think of it years ago, and its so crisp, so clean, so appropriate, you might even be able to patent this gizmo, market it and make a fortune. If there's any possibility that it could really happen, definitely write it down.

AQUARIUS: tJanuary 20 to February 18) You could get a bonus today, but be careful. If you spend it on something that's good for the home and family, you'll prosper. If you spend it on anything else, you won't. That's all there is to it, so don't squander your resources on things that won't last, or even on worthy causes.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) There appears to be a fly creeping into the ointment later today. Hopefully its not something broken that has be fixed, and costs more than you thought it would. But that could happen, so be careful, especially around machinery. You probably ought to take your car in for an oil change.



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Blatter backs down on World Cup plan

GENEVA (AFP) — FIFA President Sepp Blatter has backed down on plans to hold the World Cup finals every two years.

Blatter said Wednesday that he would not put his controversial proposal to the next executive committee meeting of football's governing body. which is scheduled for Zurich on March 11-12.

Blatter said he would hold further meetings with UEFA chief Lennart Johansson, with whom he discussions Wednesday morning, hefore making any further push for the switch.

"Before examining the possibility of moving the World Cup to every two years we need to put in place an international calendar that everyone agrees on," Blatter said.

There has been wideopposition Blatter's idea, which he first unveiled late last year.

Blatter now admits that various continental championships would need to be rescheduled before any consideration can be given to a World Cup every two years. Johansson said he was

pleased with Blatter's move. "We appreciate the fact that Blatter came personally to put forward his plans,"



FIFA President Sepp Blatter (R) touches his head as he is flanked by UEFA President Lennart Johansson during a press conference in Geneva on Wednesday. The UEFA forced Blatter to hack down on his plan to stage the World Cup every two years but Blatter still hopes it will happen in the long-term (Reuters photo)

He added that Blatter realised that he had made a mistake by talking to the press about his World Cup proposals instead of letting the football community know first what he had in

"UEFA is still not convinced about changing the timetable of the World Cup, but at least we have now got a base for constructive dialogue," Johansson said. By withdrawing his plan to change the frequency of the World Cup, Blatter bas avoided a showdown in Zurich with his executive

Johansson controls majority of votes. But Blatter still hasn't completely abandoned bope of eventually convincing world foothall of the merits

committee,

The secretary generals of the International Football Confederations are going to bold regular meetings in a bid to try and unify the international calendar, Blatter said. "There is a willingness of behalf of everyone to find a solution and I hope that agreement will be reached within 18

Brazil, France still top FIFA rankings

PARIS (AFP) - Latest FIFA rankings published Wednesday: Brazil 786

2. France 3. Croatia

742 4. Italy 5. Germany 738 Argentina

7. Czech R · 727 8. Netherlands 716

9. Spain 706 Romania 698

 England 12. Mexico

13. Norway Sweden 659

Denmark 16. Yugoslavia 649

18. Austria 19. Morocco 629 20. Chile

17. Portugal

VANCOUVER (R) — Basketball bad boy and seven-time NBA rebounding champion Dennis

Rodman became a Los on Laker Tuesday night, the team announced. Rodman. expected to practice with the team Wednesday and

make his Lakers debut Friday at the forum against the cross-town Clippers. "I welcome him to the team," said Lakers guard

Kobe Bryant. "I think it will create a spark. He'll he fine. He'll

It's going to be nice, I think a good experience to play with him.

The signing of Rodman to a one-year contract with a player option for the 1999-2000 season was made official following a 93-83 loss at Vancouver. the Lakers' third defeat in three days on the road.

Los Angeles could have used his rebounding and defensive presence, as it was outrebounded 49-41 and let Vancouver score 30 points in the paint.

Rodman will make about \$468,000, or about \$12,000 per game for the Lakers' remaining 39 games in the lockoutshortened regular season. Los Angeles had only the \$1 million 10-year veteran's minimum available to pay him under the NBA's current salary structure, and that was pro-rated for games remaining.

Lakers sign Rodman

Rodman had more or less confirmed he would sign a day earlier when, in a weepy, rambling press conference, he complained: "No. I'm not happy with the contract. It's about minimum wage for the league and the taxes will be about

\$200,000." The Lakers waited to make the announcement until after Tuesday's game because of league roster rules.

Rodman made \$9 million last season, when he helped the Chicago Bulls win their third straight championship — and his fifth title overall. But teammates as focused as Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen admitted he at times tested their focus with his bizarre sometimes behaviour,

flouting team rules. During the NBA finals. he skipped practice to appear on a wrestling programme.

He represents a huge gamble for a Lakers team that is a disappointing 6-6 despite baviog superstar Shaquille O'Neal at centre and the brilliant 20year-old Bryant now starting.

A number of teams including the Orlando Magic and Miami Heat had been in the running for Rodman's services, but for the past couple of weeks it had appeared

that the mysterious player would either play for the Lakers or nobody.

At Monday's news con ference. Rodman flanked by his actress. wife Carmen Electra and wearing two diamond rings in his pierced nose and one on his upper lip - had been asked if he was being selfish in holding out against the Lakers for two weeks. Tears welled in Rodman's eyes.

"You call me selfish Last year I gave SI million to charity. I give my all on the court, but no matter what I do for this league or the game of basketball I can never win in situations like this. I am never going to win with you people." he said. In addition to his-

Chicago "three-peat," Rodman won titles with the Detroit Pistons in 1989 and 1990.

He has averaged 7.5 points and 13.2 rebounds in his career, which includes a two-year stintwith the San Antonio Spurs.

Rodman also has heen suspended six times in the last seven years, including twice by the league, and once kicked a cameraman in the groin.

Gebrselassie to attack record book

Ethiopia's Haile Gehrselassie will lead assaults on World Athletics records in what is expected to be the biggest-ever field at the World Indoor Championships in Japan next week, organisers said Wednesday.

There will be at least 10 champions, including Gebrselassie who aims to reestablish himself 3,000m indoors at the March 5-7 championships in Maebashi, north of

The field is expected to reach 719 athletes from 123 metres, aims to crack the nations, topping the 712 athletes from 118 countries at the last indoor champi-

clocked in the heats.

Kipketer confirmed for

indoor championships

MONTE CARLO (AFP) - Wilson Kipketer, the world

record holder and world champion in the 800 metres, on

Wednesday confirmed he will compete in the IAAF

World Indoor Championships in Maebashi, Japan, next

The formidable Kenyan-born Danish athlete not only

won the 800m indoor title in Paris two years ago but also

set two new world records for the distance, with a mark of

Imin 42.67sec in the final demolishing the 1:43.96 he

He will he one of the great attractions of this year's

championships, which will be contested from March 5-7.

Kenya just over 12 months ago. His recovery has been

long and difficult, but his iron will and determination

helped him overcome the residual effects of the sickness

and make a sensational return to the track when he

clocked 1:43.74 in Monte Carlo in August last year and

Kipketer slumped, however, at the European

Championships in Budapest, where he finished last in the

final with a time of 1:50.13. This result convinced the

world record holder to interrupt his season and to under-

He believes a spell of winter training in Australia has

1:43.18 in Zurich just four days later.

go further detailed medical tests.

Kipketer caught malaria whilst on holiday in his native

ooships in Paris two years komen a year earlier in

The committee was still waiting for official replies from 39 oations, including the United States, Italy and Kenya, although the deadline for individual entries passed on Tuesday.

The U.S. delegation is to be named after the national championships on Friday and Saturday.

But the organisers are ipation on the basis of preliminary entries.

Gebrselassie, who holds the world outdoor records for 5,000 and 10,000 3,000m indoor mark of 7min 24.90sec set by Kenyan arch-rival Daniel budapest. The 25-year Ethiopian set

world indoor record of 12:50.38 for the 5,000 metres in Birmingham last week. Also among the early

entries is Cuban Ivan Pedroso, gearing up for a fourth straight men's longjump title, while Maria Mutola of Mozambique is raring to go for a fourth in a row in the women's 800metre dash.

Cuban high jumper Javier Sotomayor, who holds the world's outdoor record, will aim to regain the title he won in 1989, 1993 and

Hiddink

axed by

Real

Madrid

MADRID (AFP) — Real

Madrid's Dutch coach

Guus Hiddink was sacked

after a board meeting of the

Spanish club in the early

hours of Wednesday morn-

ing, club president Lorenzo

"The team team is not

working," Sanz said. "I

don't know if its the fault

of the coach or the players.

I think everyone could he

at fault but at the end of the

day it is always the coach

Youngsters lead **Rockets past Sonics**

HOUSTON Youngsters Cuttino Mobley and Othella Harrington took over for their more famous elders down the stretch, combining for 20 points in the fourth quarter as the Houstoo Rockets took a 98-86 victory over the Seattle Supersonics on Tuesday.

Future Scottie Pippen and Hakeem Olajuwon scored 19 points apiece but combined for only six in the final period, when the Rockets pulled away.

Mobley, a rookie secondround pick, scored 13 of his season-high 19 points in the fourth quarter. Harrington, a third-year player who has replaced injured superstar Charles Barkley in the starting lineup, added seven of his

"I had some tough calls against me early but I was able to stay focused to help us in the second balf." said Harrington, who made 7-of-10 shots and leads the NBA in shooting percentage. "It's great to be back on the winning track and have confidence again."

"I wanted to break out and needed one of these games," said Mobley, who added six rebounds and five assists. "I wanted to get in there and hopefully get some more respect in the league." Pippen and Olajuwon

grabbed 10 rebounds apiece for the Rockets, who improved to 4-0 at home. Gary Payton had 26 points, 10 assists and seven steals for the Sonics, who have gone 1against

Conference powers Utah,

Los Angeles and Houston

In Vancouver, the Grizzlies

defeated the weary Los

Angeles Lakers for the first

time in franchise history, 93-

83, because Shareef Abdur-

over the last four days.

who pays for defeat." The Real Madrid bosses paradoxically made their decision following a 1-0 victory against racing Santander sealed a semifinal place in the Spanish

down the stretch and Shaquille O'Neal did not. The Grizzlies had been 0-12 against Los Angeles, but

with the Lakers playing for the third consecutive night, were able to maintain a lead throughout the fourth quarter. Rahim scored 28 points and bad 14 rebounds and three assists. He had eight points in the final period and went 6-of-7 from the foul

line in the final 1:39. O'Neal had 26 points but missed 3-of-6 free throws in the fourth quarter. O'Neal grabbed 10 rebounds and dished out seven assists for the Lakers, who were winless in a three-day trek to Seattle, Denver and Vancouver. In New York, the Knicks

held the New Jersey Nets to a 26 per cent shooting rate and a stifling \$2-74 victory.

Patrick Ewing had 20 points, 11 rebounds and

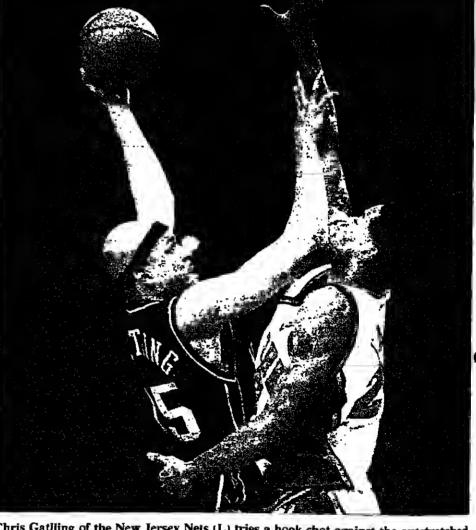
seven blocks for New York. which has won seven of eight games since losing swingman Latrell Sprewell to a fractured heel. In Washington, 35-year-old Terry Porter scored 10 of his

16 points during a pivotal five-minute stretch of the second half and the Miami Heat won their sixth straight game, 96-80 over the Signed as a free agent just before the season, Porter has

done a good joh providing offence in the absence of starter Voshon Lenard. Porter is averaging 10.7 points per game off the

Alonzo Mourning bad 29 points, 12 rebounds and five blocks and Tim Hardaway added 20 points and eight assists for Miami. At Detroit, 35-year-old Joe

Dumars scored eight of his 16 points in a decisive thirdquarter run as the Pistons shook off the worst offensive



Chris Gatlling of the New Jersey Nets (L) tries a hook shot against the outstretched arm of Marcus Camhy of the New York Knicks (R) in second quarter of game at Madison Square Garden in New York (AFP Photo)

performance in franchise history with a convincing 106-80 victory over the Raptors. Grant Hill added 14 points,

a team-leading nine rebounds and 10 assists for the Pistons, who had lost six of their last seven games, including Sunday's 85-64 debacle at San Antonio.

In Chicago, Glenn Robinson's slicing dunk with 4.3 seconds left snapped a tie and lifted the Milwaukee Bucks to a 90-88 victory over the Bulls.

Ron Harper's last-chance layup was off the mark as the Bulls fell to 2-9 overall and

Robinson finished with 24 points and Ray Allen and Dell Curry added 16 apiece for the Bucks, who beat the Bulls for the second time this season after losing 11 in a row dating to the 1994-95 season finale. In Dallas, Michael Finley

made sure the Mavericks did not blow a 17-point secondhalf lead, hitting two crucial jumpers and a pair of free throws in the final 81 sec-onds of an 89-85 victory over the Atlanta Hawks. Finley scored 16 of his 22

points in the second half. Mookie Blaylock scored 22 points for Atlanta but 21st game.

missed his last four shots in an 84-second span late in the game.

In Los Angeles, Bimbo Coles and John Starks combined for 18 points in the fourth quarter and each made free throws down the stretch as the Golden State Warriors kept the Clippers winless with a 94-89 victory.

Starks finished with 18 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds, while Coles scored 15 points. Golden State has won five of its last six games after an 0-5 start, Last season, the Warriors did not record their fifth win until the

CLOSED

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put him in good shape for Maebashi. Rahim hit his free throws Risham Yanes Theatre PLAZA PHILADELPHIA '2' PHILADELPHIA \1' CONCORDE GALLERIA 1 GALLERIA 2 **ABDOUN ABDOUN** Robert De Niro - Jen Reno ..., in Comedian Demi Moore ... in www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Ronin www.cns.com.jo/Galleria A'del Emmam .. In Robert De Niro - Jen Reno in TODAY Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 8:15, **EDDIE MURPHY** G.I.JANE AL ZA'EEM 8:30, 10:30 SINGLES Ronin DR. DOLITTLE CONCORDE "2" DECORATION Alwad Mahrous Tha'a Al Wazir Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 8:15, Shows: 12:15, 3:15, 6:30, 9:45 Shows: 3:30, 8:30, 8:30, 10:30 Shows: 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 8:30, 10:30

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toybox (AFP) — English to Argentization right back His istroid plays for rosario can add above target for Spani

Hill may quit Form

ONDON (AFP) - Damos been of have a successful ye How long Damon can go or b day, if he doesn't, he'll w Heinz-Harald Frentzen for t lordan added: "He'll be stre bugh and on top of him he w he year Hill. 38. made bi in in Belgium last year. le and Formula One race win

onship - with Williams. Middlesbrough k

%ONDON (AFP) — Middle Blanca to resume his career Rednesday Branca returned ther just 20 minutes of actio Rabber when Middlesbrou of the langer stand up K glowing report from a cons though to resume playing. I and Cambridge plater and the professional We've had a medical opini this consultant is that it won the in October and invited h be should follow the course the Dr. Dandy in Cambride

Thee. Allen told Clubcail.

Rodman.

International Olympic Committee Vice President Dick Pound bolds up a gift that was presented to him after speaking at a luncbeon for the Canadian Club in Ottawa. February 23. Pound said that IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch should not step down from his position despite pressure over the Olympic bribery scandal

Two Australians on fraud charges after Olympic village raid

SYDNEY(AFP) — Two men appeared in court here Wednesday charged in connection with an alleged AS8 million (\$5 million) tax fraud involving Sydney's Olympic village and other

major construction sites. Company director James Soong and accountant Edward Pearce were arrested following simultaneous raids hy 30 Australian federal police and tax inveso-

lage and five other projects. Bank accounts frozen and assets seized including cars and a conference centre in South Australia, a federal police spokesman told AFP.

We have a conference centre outside Adelaide and a number of motor cars including a Rolls Royce," he said, adding police were seeking global restraining orders for property allegedly owned hy Soong in sev-

The raids followed a sixmonth investigation of 30 companies allegedly con-

trolled by Soong. A significant percentage of the tax fraud allegedly relates to work at the Olympic village. Soong and Pearce both

faced three charges of Commonwealth Australia and Soong was ilso charged with o of organised fraud under the proceeds of crimes act.

Neither made any plea when they appeared before a Sydney magistrate and were released on hail of half a million dollars each.

Federal police spokesman Stephen Simpson said officers with search warrants moved simultaneously on the huilding sites including the Olympic village on

"But we were not required

to use the search warrants at the Olympic village where we entered at the invitation of the personnel present," he said.

.The construction workers' union released a statement claiming abuse of the taxation system is rife in the construction industry and allegations relating to the Olympic site contractor are the tip of the iceberg.

Abuse included w wrongly classified as subcontractors therefore paying much lower tax rates than pay-as-you-earn workers. and employers making cash payments for overtime or other allowances, union

secretary John Sutton said. "There is massive abuse of the tax system in the construction industry," Sutton said. "The tax office's interest in this industry is long

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Forest offer trial to Argentine defender

LONDON (AFP) — English premiership struggler Nottingham Forest are giving a trial to Argentinian right hack Hector Louis Gordano, they announced Wednesday. The 23year-old plays for rosario central, the former club of derby county star Horacio Carbonari, and is also a target for Spanish side Espanyol.

Hill may quit Formula One — Jordan

LONDON (AFP) - Damon Hill could quit Formula One at the end of the season if he does not have a successful year with Jordan, his team boss Eddie Jordan said Wednesday. "How long Damon can go on? I don't know. If he does a good job for us, we'll want him to stay. If he doesn't, he'll want to stop himself," said Jordan, who has teamed hill with Heinz-Harald Frentzen for the new campaign, which begins in Australia next month. Jordan added: "He'll be strong enough to make that decision. If things are getting too rough and on rop of him he would be the first to come to us and say 'l'll go at the end of the year'." Hill, 38, made history when he racked up Jordan's first and only Grand Prix win in Belgium last year, leading home his then teammate ralf schumacher. It was bis 22nd Formula One race win. He won all his other 21 - and the world drivers' championship - with Williams.

Middlesbrough keep Branca's career on hold

LONDON (AFP) - Middlesbrough are still refusing to allow their Italian striker Marco Branca to resume his career — despite another positive fitness report, it was reported Wednesday. Branca returned to the club this week claiming he was fit to resume playing after just 20 minutes of action in the last nine months. His career had been put on hold in October when Middleshrough's orthopaedic consultant ruled a severe knee problem would no longer stand up to the rigours of professional football. Branca, 34, has had a glowing report from a consultant in the United States, who claims the player is strong enough to resume playing. But Boro refuse to sanction his return until he has visited a consultant in Cambridge - which they insist was the course previously agreed with the player and the professional foothallers' association. Club spokesman Dave Allen said: We've had a medical opinion which says Marco's knee is unstable, and the opinion of our consultant is that it won't stand up to the stresses of football. "We advised Marco of this in October and invited him to get a second opinion. In view of what's at stake we feel he should follow the course of action everyone previously agreed, and that is to go and see Dr. Dandy in Cambridge. "We look forward to receiving his opinion on Marco's knee." Allen told Clubcall.

Around alone yacht race set for jury room battle

AUCKLAND (AFP) -After surviving the brutal southern ocean and a dramatic rescue of French yachting star Isabelle Autissier the fate of the around alone yacht race is set to he determined in a jury room in Uruguay, race organisers said Tuesday.

There is also a growing sea of acrimony over Autissier's continued presence on board the yacht of rescuer, Italian Giovanni Soldini. As Soldini now closes in on rival Marc Frencb Thiercelin there is debate about whether Autissier is making a difference.

Both men have rounded cape horn.

Class one in the third leg of the race, from Auckland to Punta Del Este in Uruguay, has been reduced to two boats, Soldini and Thiercelin. Last week overall leader Aufssier hit disaster when ber yacbt cap-

Thiercelin said he could not turn back to her because of gear-failure on his yacht while Soldini managed to reach her and rescued her.

In an e-mail from race headquarters in South Carolina Organisers again congratulated Soldini "on his seamanship and courage in effecting a quick and safe rescue of Isabelle Autissier.

"The committee feels that the decision on whether to proceed to Punta Del Este or transfer Isabelle to another vessel or land, if or when it is prudent to do so. must be Giovanni's in consultation with Isabelle," they said in the statement.

"It is clearly understood hy both Giovanni and Isahelle that he must continue to sail his boat singlehanded and without any help from her in any aspect of routing strategy or hoat handling."

An international jury would be convened in Punta Del Este to decide what compensation Soldini should receive for assisting

"Members of the race committee will consult with Isabelle and the designer of ber yacht as soon as a meeting can be arranged in an attempt to understand bow the capsize occurred and why the boat could not be righted," the statement said.

The jury's decision is likely to seal the fate of the overall race which bas only one more leg after the current one.

It is important as Thiercelin bas lost most of the 740-kilometre (400 nautical miles) lead he gained during last week's drama. Soldini was 183 kilometres (99 miles) behind a struggling thiercelin.

The Frenchman Monday made a pit stop in Tierra Del Fuego to repair his damaged gooseneck.

But when he got back on the course he found himself in had winds and head seas which prevented him going through the strait of Le Maire and instead forced him east and outside staten island.

He is now in a windless hole while Soldini, who rounded Tuesday, is sailing in good winds.

9th Pan-Arab Games officially named 'Al Hussein Games'

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh

AMMAN - Jordanian officials have welcomed the decision hy the Council of Arah Youth and Sports Ministers to name the upcoming 9th Pan-Arab Games in Amman after His Majesty King Hussein.

The council announced their decision at the conclusion of the two-day annual meeting in Algiers, where they also agreed to increase financial aid to the Kingdom to help it prepare for the Aug.-15-31 Games.

"This is an honour and a sign of appreciation to the late King, and Jordan. His Majesty had done so much for youth and sports. He was a true athlete," Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) Vice-President Mouaffaq Al Fawwaz told the Jordan Times Wednesday.

"The 9th Games will be called 'Al Hussein Games' as a token of apprecianon by Arab ministers of youth and sports and the entire Arab youth and sports family, for the late King's honourable bumanitarian and national efforts," the council's executive committee noted.

Since the Arab Sports Federation (ASF) advanced the date of the upcom-

ing Games to 1999 instead of 2001, the Council of Arab Youth and Sports Minister's increased aid to the Kingdom to enable it to prepare infrastructure and update sports facilities.

In the past couple of months, Jordanian officials have been exerting increased efforts to acquire as much support as possible. Aid from the Arab League has been raised to \$500,000, while the Council of Arah Ministers will grant \$200,000.

Sponsorship for Jordan's bid will be garnered through lowering the 50 per cent ASF margin of profit on promotion and television coverage.

The Jordanian government has earmarked JD18 million for the event including the construction of a multi-purpose indoor stadium with a capacity for 7,000 spectators; an Olympic-size swimming pool; a track and field stadium, in addition to acquiring and upgrading facilities with electronic timing machines and other needs.

The rest of the venues would be utilised at private universities and educational institutions that have already expressed readiness to host some of the

At the opening of the 24th annual meeting, presided by Egypt's minister of higher education, Dr. Mufeed Shihab, the participants stood a minute's silence in mourning for King Hussein who died Feh. 7 after a seven month struggle with cancer.

Commemorating King Hussein's contributions and efforts for the Arah Nation and mankind was Daw Sweidan, the Arah League's Assistant Secretary General who gave the opening speech on behalf of Arab League Secretary General Dr. Ismat Abdul Mejuid.

According to Jordanian officials, 25 facilities, including three sport cides, have been finalised to include 27 events

for men and 19 for women. More than 15 countries and over 3.000 athletes and officials are expect-

ed to participate in the Games. Lebanon which bosted the 8th Pan-Arab Games last summer, received \$28 million from Saudi Arahia and Kuwait to belp in the construction of sports

facilities destroyed during the civil war. The Amman Games will be followed by the first Arab Paralympics.

The Pan-Arab Games bave only been held eight times: Alexandria in 1953, Beirut in 1957, Casahlanca 1961, Cairo 1965, Morocco 1985, Damascus 1992

Japan's Sugiyama crashes at first hurdle

PARIS (AFP) — Japanese No. 1 Ai Sugiyama crashed at the first hurdle at the \$520,000 Paris Indoor Open here on Wednesday when she went down 6-1, 3-6, 6-1 to spain's Virginia Ruano-Pascual.

The usually ice-cool 23year-old Sugiyama was never able to find her rhythm and she was lucky to escape a warning when she threw her racket to the ground in frustration after surrendering the 30-minute

The Japanese player, who gave eventual finalist Venus Williams a run for her money in a tight second-round match in Hanover last week, was badly let down hy her serve and made a score of unforced errors on the tiny annexe No. I court at the

Although she appeared to climb back in the driving seat when she went 3-0 clear in the second set, she came under renewed pressure from the nagging haseline accuracy of Ruano-Pascual and went to pieces again in the third.

She finally handed the 90-minute match to her 25year-old opponent when she carelessly hlasted a round-arm overhead over the baseline.

Ruano-Pascual now faces last year's runner-up and third-seed Dominique Van Roost of Belgium for a place in the quarterfinals. Earlier, Croatia's Iva Majoli made a winning start when she defeated

Elena Tatarkova of the Ukraine 7-5, 6-2 in 69 min-Majoli, the French Open

champion in 1997 and a runner-up here three years ago when she was the world's fourth-ranked player, was clearly relieved to bave scored her first win

After first round defeats in Tokyo and Hanover. Majoli is currently strug-

gling to stay in the top 30. She now plays Nathalie Dechy of France for a place FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

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Martina Hingis

Hingis denies playing Mauresmo will be a 'grudge' match

PARIS (AFP) - World No. she grinned. l Martina Hingis reached a possible quarter-final showdown with Amelie Mauresmo of France at the Paris Indoor Open on Wednesday and quickly denied that there was any had feeling between the

Hingis, who scored a sbarp 6-1, 6-1 victory over Yugoslav qualifier Sandra Nacuk in just 41 minutes to reach the last eight, said that her remarks about mauresmo's physical appearance and self-confessed homosexuality before the two met in the Australian Open final had been taken out of con-

"It was just a joke but it was misunderstoood and turned into a hig thing," said the Swiss teenager, who was reported to bave claimed before winning the ritle that playing Mauresmo would be like playing "half a man."

"She is a very talented player and she can do what she likes in her private life," said Hingis. "Of course on court every-

one wants to win. And if we play here I think it will be a very interesting match. But we have no reason to be enemies. Perhaps you want us to put on boxing gloves?"

In her first match since her triumph in Tokyo, Hingis looked supremely confident. And once she had pocketed the first set with the cbeekiest of drop shots, she never looked hack. Nacuk, an 18-year-old

qualifier who is currently ranked a modest 123rd, had looked impressive when she put out home player Sarah Pitkowski in the first round.

But against the world's top player and in front of a packed and noisy Coubertin stadium crowd, she clearly suffered stage fright and was unable to adapt to the top seed's changes of pace and direction.

"Obviously I'm very pleased. I think I played really well," said Hingis, a Hahsudova.

winner here two years ago. "It was a perfect first match for me and i definitely think i am on track to win here again." asked what she bad been

doing in recent weeks, Hingis replied: "I have been shooting a publicity film and I got my driving licence. Now I can drive on my own. It's great."

After a moment's reflection she added: "But I don't think I would want to try driving bere - especially around the Arc de Triomphe."

Before reaching a quarterfinal clash with Hingis on Friday, Mauresmo first has to beat compatriot Laurence Andretto and then Karina Slovakia's

orably have been the controct'o death knell, but we too would have

led o spade from the West hand.
An obvious exchange that will

defeat slam is the nine and ten of clubs. Now declarer must lose two club tricks and has no way to come to 12 tricks. The other is the eight and nine of hearts; follow the play

to learn why.

Declarer won the opening lead in chunmy with the jack and led o club to the jack and king. West perse-

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH

A SPOT TOO MUCH North's jump to four no trump was invitational, and South accepted on the strength of the good five-card club suit. A heart lead would mex-North-South vulnerable. South

◆108 ♥KJ103 ♦4 +K964 SOUTH

The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTI RAST
24 Page 20 Page
2NT Page 4NT Page
6NT Page Page Page

Opening lead: Seven of . We have often written about the

importance of spotcards. Change one card in the West hond with either North or South, increasing its worth by one pip, end six no trump must fail. Which are the

cards involved?
South's first two bids showed o

vered with a spade, again taken on the table. Declarer cashed the ten of clubs, came to hand with the ace of spades on which East oluffed the jack of hearts, then ran three more club tricks.

East had no problem with the first two discards, parting with a card in each red suit. On the last club East could not let another discards.

crub East could not let another dia-mond go, so was forced down to a bare king of bearts. When North's fourth diamond did not sot up, declarer led a beart to the ace, and the nine of hearts was the fulfilling trick. But what if declarer held the

eight and West the nine? Little things mean n lot!

U.S. court allows deportations of alleged PFLP members

U.S. Supreme Court ruled on Wednesday that the U.S. govemment may deport seven Palestinians and a Kenyan linked to what the government has alleged is a Palestinian "terrorist" group

The high court by an 8-1 vote, overrumed a U.S. appeals court ruling that blocked the U.S. government from deporting the eight aliens allegedly affiliated with the militant Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

The decision was a victory for the U.S. justice department, which argued that a 1996 change in the immigration law meant that lederal courts no longer have jurisdiction over the case involving the aliens known as the 'L.A. [Los Angeles] 8.

The justice department said the law stripped the federal courts of the authority to review the immigrants' constitutional claims.

In a sweeping 21-page ruling that upholds the government's

Justice Antonin Scalia agreed with that argument.

The 1996 law "deprives the federal courts of jurisdiction" over the lawsuit by the aliens, he said, adding, 'judicial review... of these proceedings is unavailable."

Scalia also sided with the government by ruling there was no requirement to permit immediate review of the claims by the aliens that they were unfairly singled out for enforcement because of their political views.

"As a general matter -- and assuredly in the context of claims such as those put forward in the present case — an alien unlawfully in this country bas no constitutional right to assert selective enforcement as a defence against his deportation," Scalia wrote.

The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS), an agency which is part of the justice department, has sought to deport the eight since 1987, alleging that the PFLP is "an

broad powers to deport aliens, international terrorist" organi- ed to support "terrorism."

The federal government says the eight have violated a series of laws, including failing to maintain student status, working without authorisation and overstaying a visit.

The eight maintain that they have not violated any laws, and are being targeted for deportation solely because of their political beliefs, in violation of their constitutional free-speech rights under the first amend-

A federal judge in Los Angles ruled against the govemment, concluding that the PFLP, a radical offshoot of the Palestine Liberation had been Organisation. engaged in a wide range of lawful activities. The judge

The San Francisco-based appeals court upheld the decision. It ruled that the mere act of raising money for a group such as the PFLP does not justify deportation unless the fund-raisers specifically intend-

blocked the deportations.

The supreme court reversed

the appeals court's decision. In a separate concurring opinion, Justice John Paul Stevens said the intended disposition by Congress under the 1996 law of cases like this one "is plain. It must be dismissed."

In dissent, Justice David Souter said it was "highly improbable that Congress actually intended to raise a permanent barrier to judicial review for aliens" whose proceedings were pending when the 1996 law rook effect.

The eight immigrants are Aiad Barakat, Naim Sharif, Khader Hamide, Michel Shehadeh, Bashar Amer and brothers Ayman and Amjad Obeid — all Jordanian nationals - and Hamide's wife, Julie Mungai from Kenya.

They were arrested by the FBI and immigration agents in 1987 in Los Angeles even though a lengthy FBI investigation failed to turn up any evidence of plans to commit criminal or "terrorist" acts.



SECURITY IN SOUTH LEBANON: Relatives of Afffa Hamdan pray Wednesday over ber corpse in front of the barbed wire which was erected one week ago by the Israelis to incorporate the village of Arnoun into the Israelioccupied area of southern Lebanon. Hamdan's relatives were forced to carry her body around a 40-kilometre detour just to reach the village cemetery, which lies a mere 12 kilometres from their house, outside the Israeli

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel nixes Israel-Iraq solidarity group

TEL AVIV (AFP) - Israel's interior ministry has refused to authorise the creation of an association to promote "sobdarity between the Israeli and Iraqi people," officials said Wednesday. The law prohibits any contact between Israelis and nationals of countries in a state of conflict with Israel and this is the case with Iraq, which is our enemy," said Amiram Bogat, the ministry official responsible for registering non-profit associations. Sami Michael, an Iraqi-born Israeb writer who was behind the project, protested the ministry's decision and insisted his group had no intention of contacting "Iraqi government representatives." "Our association wants to encourage relations between the two peoples, who are not at war with one another and who are obliged to find a way to live in peace in the region," Michael said on Israel Radio. "Our aim is to develop ties with the Iraqi people who are themselves victims both of Saddam Hussein's bloody regime and of the sanctions imposed on the country by the international community," he said.

Egypt's population is 62,687,839

CAIRO (AP) — The government announced Wednesday that Egypt's population has reached 62,687,839. Announcing the results of a census carried out in January 1998. Egypt's Middle East News Agency (MENA) said the population is increasing by 3,444 persons every day or by about 25 people every second. MENA quoted Ayah Alawi, the head of the Central Organisation for Statistics and Mobilisation, as saying that the latest census showed a significant increase of the population. It did not elabo-

Bride burned for rejecting advances

CAIRO (AP) - Police on Wednesday arrested a 60-year-old man after he allegedly doused his newlywed daughter-in-law with gasoline and set her on fire for spurning his sexual advances. The woman, Iglal Ahmad Zaki, 18, was in critical condition with third-degree burns over 85 per cent of her body. police officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity. The woman was alone in the house with her father-in-law, Mustafa Hamad Masri, while her husband, Mohammad, worked in a neighbouring province, said the officials. Masri, frustrated by Zaki's rejections, first threatened to kill her. When she resisted again, he doused her with gasoline and set her ablaze on Tuesday. said the officials.

Man sold HIV-contaminated blood

CAIRO (AFP) — At least two women are known to have been infected by blood provided by an HIV-positive gay man who sold his blood to a number of hospitals here, judicial officials said on Wednesday. The authorities fear that more people may have been infected by the blood provided last year by Said Metwali Salem, 33. The first case came to light last December, when doctors realised that a 60-year-old woman who had been on kidney machine had contracted the HIV virus, which can lead to AIDS. Health ministry officials traced the blood used in the transfusion to Salem, who was arrested Dec. 6 but released when he said he did not know he was HIV-positive. A second woman aged 62 was found last week to have been contaminated by Salem's blood in another private hospital in Cairo.

Israeli planes raid southern Lebanon

SIDON (AFP) — Israeli warplanes staged a raid on Wednesday against a target in the Israeli-occupied "security zone" in southem Lebanon, security sources said. An Israeli fighter-bomber fired two missiles at around 2:20 p.m. (1220 GMT) at an unspecified target between the villages of Markaba and Bani Hayyane, the sources said. There were no immediate reports of casualties. Hizbollah guertillas were exchanging artillery fire in the area Wednesday with Israeli gunners and those of the Israeli-allied militia the South Lebanon Army (SLA), Lebanese police said.

Kuwaiti boy jailed for shooting teacher

KUWAIT CTTY (AFP) — Kuwait's highest court has upheld a 40-month jail term handed down to a 15-year-old Kuwaiti student for shooting his Egyptian science teacher after a quarrel, a newspaper said Wednesday. The court concluded that the boy, identified as A. Dafiri, "was determined to kill his teacher but could not because he had no more bullets," the Arab Times said. Dafini, son of a senior police officer, took his father's pistol and shot Egyptian Motaz Ibrahim twice at close range in the science laboratories, seriously injuring him.

Erbakan stands for Turkish elections

ANKARA (AP) --- Former Premier Necmettin Erbakan, challenging government restrictions on his political activity, said Wednesday he will run for parliament in national elections April 18. Erbakan said he planned to run as an independent in the central Anatolian city of Konya, a stronghold of the Islamist movement where his chances of winning the seat would be good. It was unclear whether the national electoral board would accept the 72-year-old politician's bid. In January 1998, he was barred from being a member of a political party for five years, but there was debate on whether he can run as an independent.

New Iran intelligence chief approved by parliament

TEHRAN (AFP) — The parliament on Iranian Wednesday overwhelmingly approved the appointment of Ali Yunesi, a 43year-old conservative cleric. to bead the scandal-tainted intelligence ministry.

A total of 197 members of the conservative-dominated parliament, the majlis. voted in favour of Yunesi following two bours of debate while nine opposed his nomination and 18 abstained,

Yunesi was named by Mohammad President Khatami to take over as head of the powerful ministry following the resignation of the former Minister. Najafabadi.

Najafabadi stepped down on Feb. 9 following revelauons that "rogue" intelligence agents had been involved in the high-profile murders of several Iranian dissidents and writers last

The vote in favour of Yunesi followed a speech by Khatami in which he said that changes at the intelligence ministry had become indispensable" following the wave of assassinations.

"We are determined to eradicate the malignant cancer which was behind the murders," Khatami said, noting that the brutal slay-

ings bad "shocked" both the government and the popula-

We want an intelligence agency and not a repressive police apparatus." Iran's reformist president said, adding that the new minister should display "greater intelligence.

"We need strong arms but smart heads," he said.

The intelligence ministry revealed in January that several agents of its agents had been arrested in connection with the murders of the leader of a nationalist opposition group and his wife and three writers campaigning for greater freedom of expression in the Islamic

Conservatives in regime have insisted the killings were the work of foreign agitators while reformists bave accused Islamists - backed by conservatives - of being behind the murders.

Yunesi, in a brief speech, said his goal as head of the ministry would be "reestablish authority."

"Authority, of course, but also popularity," he added. Yunesi beaded a special committee of inquiry into the dissidents' murders and bas wide experience in intelligence affairs having helped establish the intelligence ministry in the early

1980s after the Islamic revolution. The holder of master's

degrees in both education and political science, Yunesi has also served as a public prosecutor in Tehran and as head of the judicial division of the armed forces. He joined Palestinian and

Lebanese guerrilla groups after being forced to leave the country in 1975 due to bis anti-Shah activities. according to a biography published by the IRNA news agency.
On his return, he was

arrested and "severely tortured" in 1978 by SAVAK, the Shah's secret police,

prepared to supply Syria with latest **MiG-29** — envoy

Russia

prepared to supply Syria with the upgraded version of its MiG-29 fighter aircraft, a Russian diplomat in Lebanon said.

tarily with Syria as part of a long relationship that encompasses culture and economy, said Boris Soldatov, the Russian military attaché in Beirut. He was speaking at a party on Tuesday at the

known as Red Army Day. "The MiG-29 surpasses U.S. and Western aircraft in some aspects. We are ready to sell it to Syria or

Soldatov appeared to be referring to the MiG-29 SMT version of the fighter plane. Russia rolled out the first of the latest

A Russian military spokesman said at the time the MiG-29 SMT

aerial command post. resolved an existing \$12 billion debt for weapons supplied by the former Soviet Union. Diplomats in Syria say there are deep differences inside the Russian government over whether to press for

Syrian officials have visited each other recently to discuss a new arms deal the Kremlin said was worth \$2 billion. Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa met Russia's

Washington threatened to cancel aid to Russia if a sale of anti-tank weapons goes ahead.

Losses in Lebanon spark calls Y2K problems in Israel for talks with Syria the offer. They insist Israel

either withdraw without con-

ditions or conclude a regional

peace agreement which would

also include an Israeli pullout from the Golan Heights, which were occupied in 1967.

Opposition to any withdraw-

al from the Golan among

TELAVIV (AFP) — The loss of three army officers in a clash with Islamist guerrillas in Lebanon sparked wide-spread calls in Israel Wednesday for a resumption

of peace talks with Syria. "A solution to the Lebanon crisis can only come from Syria, which is the power behind Hizbollah." Defence Minister Moshe Arens said, referring to the Shiite Muslim militia which is battling Israel's occupation of south Lebanon.

The mass circulation newspaper Maariv, in a front-page appeal by editor-in-chief Yaacov Erez, called on Prime Benyamin Minister Netanyahu to "adopt a practical, unexpected and bold

course and begin negotiations with the Syrians. "Only in negotiations with Syria is there hope for some kind of solution in Lebanon. It is a course of action which has never been exhausted," he wrote, urging the government to approach Damascus even

elections in May. Netanyahu convened a meeting of his top security advisors to discuss responses to the battle Tuesday in which three officers of an elite paratroops unit were killed and five wounded by Hizbollah

while campaigning for general

guerrillas. It was the first deadly encounter for Israel in Lebanon this year and the heaviest losses suffered by the

army there since September

Israeli opposition politicians and a group of parents of Israeli soldiers responded as they have following earlier setbacks - calling for Israel to simply withdraw from the buffer zone it has occupied in south Lebanon for more than

20 years. Labour Party Deputy Yossi Beilin wrote Arens Tuesday saying that top Israeli security. intelligence and army officials backed his proposals for a uni-

lateral withdrawal from the But Arens, a hawk who was appointed only last month but served twice as defence minis-

would be a very dangerous gamble for the security of communities in northern Israel," he said, taking up the traditional Israeli argument that the buffer zone is needed to prevent cross-border attacks

Last year Netanyahu's gov-

ensure the security of the bor-

No mention was made of Syria, which has more than

ter in the 1980s and early 1990s, rejected the call. "A unilateral withdrawal

by Hizbollah and other hostile

emment offered to withdraw from Lebanon in exchange for guarantees from the Beirut government that it would

30.000 troops in Lebanon and is the main political power in the country. Lebanon and Syria rejected

"I hope the Syrians will change their position and enter fruitful negotiations without preconditions," he said,

Israeli hard-liners led by Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon was behind last year's conditional Lebanon withdrawal offer by Netanyahu. But with elections looming

and Netanyahu struggling in opinion polls, the right-wing prime minister has begun highlighting the need to resume negotiations with Syria which were broken off three years ago under Israel's former Labour government

"I have reason to believe that after the elections we will find a way to begin the political discussions with Syria that will effect the Lebanese border." Netanyahu said Tuesday after visiting soldiers wounded in the fight with Hizbollah. But he said Syria would first

have to drop its demand that the talks resume where they left off in 1996 - with an Israeli agreement in principle to trade the Golan for peace.

The Syrians are putting forward demands that force Israel to give up all its strategic assets and this is impossible. Netanyahu said.

CIA predicts serious around the world

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The Year 2000 computer problem could cause serious disruptions abroad, including breakdowns in nuclear reactors and strategic missile systems, midwinter power outages and disruptions in world trade and oil shipments, a CIA official warned Wednesday.

Air Force General John Gordon, deputy director of the CIA, emphasised at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing that gaps in information make it hard to assess the scope of the damage in other coun-tries, although it is evident that most, particularly Russia, are far behind the U.S. in preparing for the crisis.

Concern is spreading that vital computers will suffer breakdowns and other problems if they are not equipped to handle the change from 1999 to 2000. Gordon said Russia has exhibited a low level of awareness for the "Y2K" problems that could occur if computers misread the year 2000 as 1900, causing them to shut down or produce erroneous information.

Midwinter power outages, he said, could have "major humanitarian consequences" in countries such as Russia and Gordon stressed: "We cur-

rently do not see a danger of any country due to Y2K prob- care," they said.

But he said there could be serious local problems with missiles if temperature or humidity monitors malfunction, and that problems in early-

warning systems could lead to incorrect information. The developing world faces the greatest threats of disruptions, Gordon said. China will probably experience failures in key sectors such as telecommunications, electric power and bank-The U.S. is regarded as the world leader in fixing the Y2K

problem, but the draft of a report being prepared by two senators who have been studying the issue, Senziors Robert Bennett of Utah and Christopher Dodd of Connecticut, said the consequences within this country should not be underestimated. During the year, they said in a letter to other Senators, "we will

be confronted with one of the most serious and potentially devastating events this nation has ever encountered." Their report also pointed to other countries as very vulnerable, as well as many private U.S. industries such as health care, food processing and shipping.
This problem will affect U.S.

all individually and collectively in very profound ways, from the unauthorised or inadvertent availability of electrical power launch of ballistic missiles from to the quality of our health

Ancient Jericho trumpets in its first winter festival

JERICHO (AFP) -- With a carnel and Dead Sea. giant oranges and bananas leading the way, Jericho residents paraded through the streets of the "world's oldest town" Wednesday to launch the Oasis' first cul-

In a carnival atmosphere and under a mild desert sun, 250 schoolchildren and teens, many dressed as clowns and others teetering on high stilts, trailed the decorated camel through town to the local stadi-

Uniformed scouts and a group of sixand seven-year-olds struggled to do coordinated callisthenics while still keeping up with the parade while others carried the

Welcome to the Jericho Winter Festival, an ambitious attempt by the Palestinian National Authority to transform the ancient but sleepy farming town into a cultural centre and major tourist attraction.

"This shows that Palestinian people are still alive and kicking," beamed Saeb Erakat, a local resident and the Palestinians' chief negotiator with Israel. referring wryly to the long-standing deadlock in the peace process.

Taking a good-natured jab at the 50year-old state of Israel and its current govemment's hardline opposition to Palestinian independence, Erakat added: giant oranges and bananas which are the symbol of the ancient oasis north of the oldest town, and we know that towns are

older than states."
"This is Palestinian culture," he added, pointing to the colourfully costumed children and a passing group of scouts. "We hope this will be a first step towards having an international festival here."

Jericho, once known primarily for its tumbling walls, due to Joshua's trumpet or seven earthquakes which have levelled the town over the centuries depending on one's point of view, already made the tourist man last year with the opening of a major casino, appropriately named the

Thousands of Israelis, fleeing a ban on gambling at home, have packed the casino's gaming tables since it opened in

Now residents hope to draw a different brand of visitor to the mild winter weather of the Jordan Valley with the Jericho Winter Festival, which is scheduled to run for two long weekends. Wednesday through Sunday and then March 3-7.

The festival will feature music and dance performances alongside a host of other cultural activities aimed primarily ar children such as story-telling and creative writing. The highlight of the festival will be a

concert Thursday by Egyptian crooner Hani Shaker, one of the most popular singers in the Palestinian territories. Tens of thousands of Palestinians are expected to attend his concert in Jericho stadium, organisers suid.

"We are enthusiastic about cooperating mili-

Russian embassy to mark Day of Defenders of the Fatherland, formally

to any Arab country allied to Russia, Soldatov said.

upgraded version of the plane last December.

had an increased range and a bigger weapons payload, and could operate not just as a fighter but as an interceptor, ground attack or reconnaissance aircraft and an Syria has never

seitlement. But senior Russian and

top army brass last week in what was described as follow-up arms talks. The new deal includes anti-tank systems, which sparked protests from the U.S., Israel's backer.

Most of Syria's weapons are Russiansupplied from before the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Czech. Polish leaders ratify NATO membership

- Ended

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Family shot to death in Argentina

BLEM A AIRES (AP) — A children, was shot to dead his charge of their home in a Burner of their home in a children white and their home in a children white Burner of their home in a subject of their subject formal for other family in their home in a subject of their subject of the subject of the subject of the Argenting of the States of their subject of the Argenting of the States of their subject of their Mind an citizen, West Hi : begand early Friday with a faller weath and in her ice. She whom she did not know has been allowed down the door of he hade at them and about fit house of them and stated fir